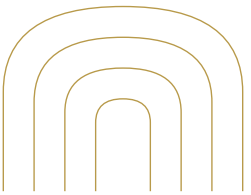
HEKHAL · READER'S EDITION



ספר הבהיר

Sefer ha-Bahir

The Book of Brightness: every section published on Hekhal, Hebrew and English

Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)

PROVISIONAL EDITION · MACHINE-ASSISTED · NOT YET REVIEWED BY A CREDENTIALED EDITOR

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About this edition

This volume gathers every part of *Sefer ha-Bahir* published on Hekhal as of 2026-08-13, in order. Each part keeps its own apparatus and notes.

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ATTRIBUTION	Anonymous (attributed to Rabbi Neḥunya ben ha-Kanah)
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Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 1-3; the brilliant light, tohu and bohu, and the bet of blessing

A fresh, openly-licensed English of the opening of the earliest work of the classical Kabbalah. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim from Hebrew Wikisource (CC-BY-SA, via Sefaria; the underlying medieval text is itself public-domain by age); the standard modern English (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright; this edition offers an openly licensed English beside the Hebrew. The translation here is **machine-assisted and provisional**, awaiting credentialed editor sign-off; corrections are welcomed.

The Bahir works by wordplay and association, not argument. Where a rendering turns on a pun in the Hebrew (and these sections turn on several), the play is preserved in transliteration and unpacked in the apparatus rather than silently resolved.



אמר ר׳ נחוניא בן הקנה: כתוב אחד אומר (איוב ל״ז כא) ועתה לא ראו אור בהיר הוא בשחקים, וכתוב אחד אומר (תהלים י״ח י״ב) ישת חושך סתרו ואומר (תהלים צ״ז ב) ענן וערפל סביביו קשיא, בא הכתוב השלישי והכריע ביניהם (שם קל״ט יב) גם חשך לא יחשיך ממך ולילה כיום יאיר כחשיכה כאורה:

Rabbi Neḥunya ben ha-Kanah said: One verse says (Job 37:21), “And now men do not see the light, brilliant (bahir) though it be in the skies”; and another verse says (Psalm 18:12), “He made darkness His hiding-place,” and it says (Psalm 97:2), “Cloud and thick darkness are round about Him”: a contradiction. The third verse came and decided between them (Psalm 139:12): “Even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night shines as the day; the darkness is as the light.”

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אמר ר׳ ברכיה מאי דכתיב (בראשית א׳ ב) והארץ היתה תהו ובהו מאי משמע היתה, שכבר היתה תהו, ומאי תהו דבר המתהא בני אדם, ומאי בהו, אלא תהו היתה וחזרה לבהו, ומאי בהו דבר שיש בו ממש דכתיב בהו בו הוא:

Rabbi Berakhya said: What is the meaning of what is written (Genesis 1:2), “And the earth was (hayetah) tohu and bohu”? What does “was” imply? That it had already been tohu. And what is tohu? A thing that astonishes (mat’ha) human beings. And what is bohu? Rather: it was tohu and reverted to bohu. And what is bohu? A thing that has substance (mamash), as it is written, “bohu”, “bo hu” (in it, it is).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומפני מה התחיל התורה בבי”ת כמה דאתחיל ברכה ומנלן דהתורה נקראת ברכה, שנאמר

And why does the Torah begin with a bet (ב)? Because blessing (berakhah) begins with it. And how do we know the Torah is

called blessing? As it is said (Deuteronomy 33:23), “and full of the blessing of the LORD, take possession of the sea and the south”, and “sea” is nothing but the Torah, as it is said (Job 11:9), “broader than the sea.” What is “full of the blessing of the LORD”? Rather: wherever a bet is said, it is an expression of blessing, as we say “Bereshit (In the beginning).” And “reshit (beginning)” is nothing but Wisdom (Ḥokhmah), as it is said (Psalm 111:10), “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD.” And Wisdom is nothing but blessing, as it is said, “and God blessed Solomon,” and it is written (1 Kings 5:26), “and the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon.” A parable: of a king who married his daughter to his son, and gave her to him at the wedding, and said to him, “Do with her as you will.”

(דברים ל”ג כ”ג) ומלא ברכת ה’ ים ודרום ירשה, ואין ים אלא תורה שנאמר (איוב י”א ט) ורחבה מני ים, מאי ומלא ברכת ה’ אלא כל מקום שנאמר בי”ת הוא לשון ברכה כדאמרינן בראשית, ואין ראשית אלא חכמה שנאמר (תהלים קי”א) ראשית חכמה יראת ה’, ואין חכמה אלא ברכה שנאמר ויברך אלהים את שלמה וכתיב (מלכים א ה כו) וה’ נתן חכמה לשלמה, משל למלך שהשיא את בתו לבנו ונתנה לו בחתונה ואמר לו עשה בה כרצונך:

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim original-language text beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

bahir (בָּהִיר)

"Brilliant, dazzling" (Job 37:21). The hapax-adjacent word that names the book. The Bahir reads the verse's "light men do not see" as the hidden brilliance, against which the darkness-verses are set.

tohu / mat'ha

Tohu (formlessness) glossed through *mat'ha*, "astonishes / confounds": the formless as what bewilders. A homiletic etymology, not a philological one.

bohu / bo hu

Bohu split into *bo hu*, "in it, it is": that which has substance (mamash). The pair stages an emergence of the determinate from the indeterminate.

bet → berakhah → reshit → Ḥokhmah

The associative chain of §3: the Torah's opening letter is the letter of blessing; "beginning" is Wisdom; Wisdom is blessing. The king's-daughter parable closes it, the first stirring of the sefirotic imagination.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 4-6; the bowing knee, the spring of living water, and the king's garden

The continuation of the Bahir's overture, picking up the word *berakhah* ("blessing") where §§1-3 left it and unfolding the book's first images of divine overflow: the spring of living water hewn from rock, and the garden the king waters from it. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim from Hebrew Wikisource (CC-BY-SA, via Sefaria; the underlying medieval text is itself public-domain by age); the standard modern English (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright; this edition offers an openly licensed English beside the Hebrew.

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ומאי דההוא ברכה לישנא דברוך הוא דילמא לישנא דברך הוא דכתיב (ישעי' מ"ה כג) כי לי תכרע כל ברך, מקום שכל ברך כורע, משל למה הדבר דומה למבקשים לראות את פני המלך ואינם יודעים אנה ביתו, שואלים אנה בית המלך תחלה ואח"כ שואלים אנה המלך, לפיכך כי לי תכרע כל ברך ואפילו עליונים, תשבע כל לשון:

And what of that "blessing" (berakhah)? Is it the language of "blessed" (barukh)? Or might it be the language of "knee" (berekh), as it is written (Isaiah 45:23), "For to Me every knee shall bow (ki li tikhra kol berekh)", the place to which every knee bows? A parable: to what is the matter compared? To those who wish to see the face of the king but do not know where his house is. First they ask, "Where is the king's house?" and only afterward do they ask, "Where is the king?" Therefore, "to Me every knee shall bow", even the upper ones, "every tongue shall swear (tishava kol lashon)."

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ישב ר' רחומאי ודרש מאי דכתיב (דברים ל"ג כג) ומלא ברכת ה' ים ודרשה ירשה, אלא בכל מקום בי"ת מבורך הוא, כי הוא המלא שנאמר ומלא ברכת ה' ומשם משקה הצריכים, ומן המלא נטלה עצה תחלה, משל למה"ד למלך שרצה לבנות פלטרין שלו בסלעים חזקים קצץ צורים וחצב סלעים ויצא לו מעין מים גדול מים חיים, אמר המלך הואיל ויש לי מים נובעים אטע גן ואשתעשע בו אני וכל העולם, ה"ד (משלי ח' ל) ואהיה אצלו אמון ואהיה שעשועים יום יום משחקת לפניו בכל עת, אמרה תורה אלפים שנה הייתי בחיקו של הקב"ה שעשועים שנאמר יום יום, ויומו של הקב"ה אלף שנה שנאמר (תהלים צ' ד') כי אלף שנים בעיניך כיום אתמול כי יעבור, מכאן ואילך לעתים שנאמר בכל עת, והשאר לעולם שנאמר (ישעי' מ"ח ט) ותהלתי אחטם לך, מאי ותהלתי דכתיב (תהלים קמ"ה א) תהלה לדוד ארוממך, מאי תהלה, משום דארוממך, ומאי רוממות' משום דאברכה שמך לעולם ועד:

Rabbi Reḥumai sat and expounded: What is the meaning of what is written (Deuteronomy 33:23), "and full of the blessing of the LORD; possess the sea and the south" (reading *darshah* as *yerashah*, "possess")? Rather: in every place a *bet* is a thing blessed (mevorakh), for it is "the Full One (ha-malei)," as it is said, "and full of the blessing of the LORD," and from there it waters those in need; and from the Full One, counsel was first drawn. A parable: to what is the matter compared? To a king who wished to build his palace among hard rocks. He cut the cliffs and hewed the stones, and there issued for him a great spring of water, living water (mayim ḥayyim). Said the king: "Since I have flowing water, I will plant a garden, and delight in it, I and all the world." This is what is written (Proverbs 8:30), "and I was beside Him as a nursling (amon), and I was His delight (sha'ashu'im) day by day, playing before Him at every time." The Torah said: "For two thousand years I was in the bosom of the Holy One, His delight," as it says, "day by day", and a day of the Holy One is a thousand years, as it is said (Psalm 90:4), "For a thousand years in Your eyes are as a

passing day, like yesterday when it is gone." From then on, "at times (le-ittim)," as it says, "at every time (be-khol et)"; and the rest, forever, as it is said (Isaiah 48:9), "and My praise (u-tehillati) I will restrain for you." What is "My praise"? As it is written (Psalm 145:1), "A praise of David: I will exalt You (aromimkha)." What is "praise (tehillah)"? Because "I will exalt You." And what is "exaltation"? Because "I will bless Your name forever and ever (avarkhah shimkha le-olam va-ed)."

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ומאי ברכה, אלא משל למה"ד למלך שנטע אילנות בגנו, ואע"פ

And what is "blessing"? Rather, a parable: to what is the matter

שירדו גשמים ושואב תמיד וגם הקרקע לח ושואב תמיד צריך הוא להשקותן מן המעיין שנאמר (תהלים קי"א י') ראשית חכמה יראת ה' שכל טוב לכל עושיהם, ואז תאמר שהיא חסרה כלום הרי אומר (שם) תהלתו עומדת לעד:

compared? To a king who planted trees in his garden. And even though the rains came down, and [the ground] drinks constantly, and the soil is moist and drinks constantly, still he must water them from the spring (ma'ayan), as it is said (Psalm 111:10), "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD; a good understanding to all who practice it." And were you then to say that it [the spring] is therefore lacking anything? Behold, it says (ibid.), "His praise endures forever."

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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berakhah / barukh / berekh

The root b-r-k heard in three senses at once (§4): *berakhah* (blessing), *barukh* (blessed), and *berekh* (knee). Isaiah's "every knee shall bow" is reread as a *place* all bend toward, a homiletic move, not a philological claim about the root's history.

ha-malei (the Full One)

Out of “full of the blessing of the LORD” (Deut. 33:23) the Bahir extracts *ha-malei*, “the Full One,” the inexhaustible source “from which the needy are watered” (§5). An early reification of a divine plenitude that overflows without depletion.

amon / oman

In Proverbs 8:30 the Torah/Wisdom is *amon* (“nursling, ward”), classically also vocalized *oman* (“craftsman, architect”), Wisdom as the one through whom the world is built, playing before God before creation (§5).

tehillah → aromimkha → avarkhah

The close of §5 loops praise back to blessing: “praise” (tehillah) because “I will exalt” (aromimkha), and exaltation because “I will *bless* Your name forever” (avarkhah), returning the excursus to *berakhah*, the word it began from.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 7-9; the sea and the south

A short aggadic cluster on Deuteronomy 33:23 (“possess the sea and the south”): the sea read as the world to come and the south as this world (§ 7); the letter heh added to Abraham’s name, whose gematria 248 matches the body’s limbs (§ 8); and the same verse’s “yerashah” heard as holding the divine name Yah, with the parable of the king’s two treasuries (§ 9).

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ישב רבי אמוראי ודרש מאי דכתיב (דברים ל”ג כג) ומלא	Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: what is written (Deuteronomy 33:23), ‘and full of the blessing of

the LORD, possess the sea and the south'? Thus said Moses: if you walk in His statutes you will inherit this world and the world to come: the world to come, which is likened to the sea, as it is said (Job 11:9), 'and broader than the sea'; and this world, likened to the south, as it is said (Joshua 15:19), 'for you have given me the land of the Negev,' which we render in the Targum as 'the land of the south.'

ברכת ה' ים ודרום ירשה, כך אמר משה אם תלך בחוקותיו תירש העולם הזה והעולם הבא, העולם הבא שהוא נמשל לים שנאמר (איוב י"א ט) ורחבה מני ים, והעוה"ז נמשל לדרום שנאמר (יהושע ט"ו יט) כי ארץ הנגב נתתני ומתרגמינן ארי ארעא דרומא:

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ועוד למה הוסיף הקב"ה ה"א באברהם יותר משאר אותיות אלא כדי שיזכו כל אבריו של אדם לחיי עולם הבא שהוא נמשל ליום, כביכול בו נשלם הבנין דכתיב (בראשית ט' ו) כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם, ואברהם בגמטריא רמ"ח כמנין אבריו של אדם:

And further: why did the Holy One add a heh to Abraham's name more than to the other letters? Only so that all the limbs of a man should merit the life of the world to come, which is likened to a day: as it were, by it the building was completed, as it is written (Genesis 9:6), 'for in the image of God He made man.' And 'Avraham' in gematria is two hundred and forty-eight, the number of a man's limbs.

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מאי דכתיב (דברים ל"ג כג) ירשה רש היה לו לומר, אלא אפי' הקב"ה בכלל, והיינו רש יה, למה"ד למלך שהי' לו ב' אוצרות והקצה אחד מהם, לסוף ימים אמר לבנו טול מה שיש בשני אוצרות הללו, אמר הבן שמא לא יתן לי מה שהקצה, א"ל טול הכל, והיינו דכתיב ים ודרום ירשה, ויה רש וינתן לך הכל ולואי שתשמור דרכי:

What is written (Deuteronomy 33:23), 'shall possess it (yerashah)'? It should have said 'shall possess (rash)', rather, even the Holy One is included, and this is 'rash Yah' (Yah is possessed within it). To what is this comparable? To a king who had two treasuries and set one of them aside. At the end of days he said to his son: take what is in these two treasuries. The son said: perhaps he will not give me the one he set aside. He said to him: take

all. And this is what is written, ‘the sea and the south, possess it (yam va-darom yerashah)’, read as ‘and Yah, take, and all shall be given to you’: would only that you keep My ways.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the sea and the south

Derash on Deuteronomy 33:23 (‘full of the blessing of the LORD, possess the sea and the south’): the two are read as the two worlds, the sea as the world to come (Job 11:9, ‘broader than the sea’) and the south (Negev) as this world (Joshua 15:19). Characteristically the Bahir clinches the point with the Aramaic Targum’s rendering of ‘Negev’ as ‘the south.‘

the heh added to Abraham and the 248 limbs

On the renaming Abram -> Abraham (Genesis 17:5), where God adds the letter heh. The gematria of Avraham (אברהם) is 248, alef 1 + bet 2 + resh 200 + heh 5 + mem 40, matching the 248 limbs of the body in rabbinic anatomy (Mishnah Ohalot 1:8). The added heh 'completes the building' of the human form made in the divine image (Genesis 9:6), so that every limb shares in the life of the world to come.

yerashah read as 'rash Yah'

A wordplay: the verse's 'yerashah' (ירשה, 'shall possess it') is heard as containing the divine name Yah (יה), 'rash Yah,' so that even the Holy One is part of the inheritance. The parable of the king's two treasuries (the one given openly and the one 'set aside') teaches that the faithful son is granted all, even the hidden portion. Sod: the concealed divine is bestowed on the one who keeps the ways.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 10-13; Rabbi Bun on creation

Rabbi Bun's cluster on creation: the pre-cosmic Torah, whose "me-olam" (from eternity) is heard as "he'elem" (concealment) and whose "bara" means "prepared all the needs" (§ 10); the split of tohu and bohu into evil and peace, with Michael on the right and Gabriel on the left (§§ 11-12); and the two verbs of Isaiah 45:7, "formation" for light that has substance and "creation" for darkness that has none (§ 13).

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אמר רבי בון מאי דכתיב (משלי ח' כ"ג) מעולם נסכתי מראש מקדמי ארץ, מאי מעולם, שצריך להעלימו מכולי עלמא דכתיב (קהלת ג' י"א) גם את העולם נתן בלבם, אל תקרא העולם אלא העלם, אמרה תורה אני קדמתי להיות ראש לעולם שנאמר מעולם נסכתי מראש ואם תאמר שמא הארץ קדמה לה ת'ל מקדמי ארץ כד"א בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ. ומאי ברא, ברא כל צרכי הכל ואח"כ אלהים, ומה כתיב בתריה את השמים ואת הארץ:

Rabbi Bun said: what is written (Proverbs 8:23), 'from eternity (me-olam) I was established, from the beginning, before the earth'? What is 'me-olam'? That it must be concealed (le-ha'alimo) from all the world, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 3:11), 'He has also set the world (ha-olam) in their heart', read it not 'the world (ha-olam)' but 'the concealment (ha-he'elem).' The Torah said: I preceded, to be the head of the world, as it is said, 'from eternity I was established, from the beginning.' And if you say, perhaps the earth preceded it, Scripture teaches, 'before the earth.' As it is said, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (Genesis 1:1). And what is 'created (bara)'? He created all the needs of everything, and afterward 'God (Elohim).' And what is written after it? 'the heavens and the earth.'

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ומאי גם את זה לעומת זה עשה האלהים (קהלת ז' יד), ברא בהו ושם מקומו בשלום וברא תהו

And what is 'God has made the one corresponding to the other (gam et zeh le'umat zeh asah ha-Elohim)' (Ecclesiastes 7:14)? He

created bohu and set its place in peace, and created tohu and set its place in evil. Bohu in peace, as it is said (Job 25:2), ‘He makes peace in His heights’: this teaches that Michael, the prince on the right of the Holy One, is water and hail, and Gabriel, the prince on His left, is fire; and the prince of peace between them reconciles, and this is what is written, ‘He makes peace in His heights.‘

ושם מקומו ברע, בהו בשלום שנאמר (איוב כ"ה ב) עושה שלום במרומיו מלמד שמיכאל שר הימיני של הקב"ה מים וברד וגבריאל שר שמאלו של הקב"ה אש, ושר שלום ביניהם מכריע והיינו דכתיב עושה שלום במרומיו:

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

And how do we know that tohu is in evil? As it is written (Isaiah 45:7), ‘who makes peace and creates evil.’ How so? Evil from tohu, and peace from bohu. He created tohu and set its place in evil, as it is said, ‘who makes peace and creates evil’; He created bohu and set its place in peace, as it is said, ‘He makes peace in His heights.‘

ומנלן דתהו הוא ברע דכתיב (ישעי' מ"ה ז) עושה שלום ובורא רע, הא כיצד רע מתהו ושלום מבהו ברא תהו ושם מקומו ברע שנא' עושה שלום ובורא רע ברא בהו ושם מקומו בשלום שנאמר עושה שלום במרומיו:

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ועוד ישב ר' בון ודרש מאי דכתיב (ישעי' שם) יוצר אור ובורא חושך, אלא אור שיש בו ממש כתיב בו יצירה, חשך שאין בו ממש כתיב ביה בריאה, כמה דאת אמר (עמוס ד, יג) יוצר הרים ובורא רוח. ואי בעית אימא אור שיש בו הויה דכתיב (בראשית א' ג) ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ואין הויה אלא ע"י עשיה, קרי ביה יצירה, חשך דלא הוה ביה עשיה אלא הבדלה והפרשה בלבד קרי ביה בריאה כמד"א הבריא פלוני:

And further, Rabbi Bun sat and expounded: what is written (Isaiah 45:7), 'who forms light and creates darkness'? Rather, of light, which has substance (mamash), 'formation (yetzirah)' is written; of darkness, which has no substance, 'creation (beriah)' is written, as you say (Amos 4:13), 'who forms mountains and creates wind.' And if you wish, say: of light, which has being (havayah), as it is written (Genesis 1:3), 'and God said, let there be light', and there is no being except by making (asiyah): read it 'formation'; of darkness, in which there was no making but only separation and division, read it 'creation,' as one says 'so-and-so recovered (hivri).'

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the pre-cosmic Torah; olam as he'elem

Derash on Proverbs 8:23, where Wisdom (read as the Torah) declares herself established before the world. 'me-olam' (from eternity) is heard through the al-tikri device as 'he'elem' (concealment, Ecclesiastes 3:11): the Torah/Wisdom is the concealed beginning that precedes creation and must be hidden. 'bara' (created) is glossed as 'prepared all the needs', creation as provision. Sod: the pre-cosmic Wisdom is Chokhmah, the 'beginning' (reshit) through which all is made.

tohu and bohu; Michael and Gabriel

On Ecclesiastes 7:14 ('God made the one corresponding to the other') read against Genesis 1:2's tohu va-bohu: bohu is set 'in peace,' tohu 'in evil.' Job 25:2 ('He makes peace in His heights') is taken to name the two opposed princes, Michael on the right (water and hail) and Gabriel on the left (fire), with a mediating 'prince of peace' reconciling them. This is the Bahir's early figuration of the polarity later systematized as Chesed (right, water) and Gevurah (left, fire) held in balance.

tohu is evil, bohu is peace

Isaiah 45:7 ('who makes peace and creates evil') is read to fix the assignment: evil issues from tohu, peace from bohu. The two verses (Isaiah 45:7 and Job 25:2) are made to interlock so that the same creative act founds both the reconciling peace and the potential for evil.

light-formation and darkness-creation; the verbs of creation

On Isaiah 45:7's two verbs: 'yotzer' (forms) light, which has substance/being, and 'bore' (creates) darkness, which has none. Light requires 'making' (asiyah) and so is 'formation' (yetzirah); darkness is only 'separation and division' and so is 'creation' (beriah, from nothing), clinched by the wordplay on the root b-r-a in 'hivri' (recovered). This distinction among the creation-verbs (bara / yatzar / asah) is the seed of the later doctrine of the graded worlds (Beriah, Yetzirah, Asiyah).

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 14-16; the letter bet and the primordial light

The letters and the light: why the bet is a “house” for the world, built by wisdom, so the Torah opens with it (§ 14); how the shapes of the bet and the alef interlock so that the world endures (§ 15); and Rabbi Rechumai’s primordial light, with the parable of the crown prepared for the King’s son before he exists, the plan that “arose in thought” (§ 16).

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למה ב סתומה מכל צד ופתוחה מלפניה ללמדך שהוא בית לעולם והיינו דקב"ה מקומו של עולם ואין העולם מקומו, ואל תקרא ב אלא בית הדא היא דכתיב (משלי כ"ד ג) בחכמה יבנה בית ובתבונה יתכונן:

Why is the bet (ב) closed on all sides and open in front? To teach you that it is a house (bayit) for the world, and this is the meaning of the Holy One being the place of the world, while the world is not His place. And do not read 'bet' but 'bayit (house),' as it is written (Proverbs 24:3), 'by wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ולמה ב' דומה, לאדם שנוצר בחכמה שסתום מכל צד ופתוח מלפניו והאל"ף פתוחה מלאחריו, לומר זה זנב הב' שפתוחה מלאחריו, שאלמלא כן לא יתקיים האדם כך אלמלא בית בזנבה של א' לא יתקיים העולם:

And to what is the bet comparable? To a man, formed with wisdom, who is closed on all sides and open in front; and the alef (א) is open behind. That is to say: this [opening] is the tail of the bet, which is open behind. For were it not so, a man could not endure; likewise, were it not for the bet at the tail of the alef, the world could not endure.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

אמר ר' רחומאי האורה קדמה לעולם שענן וערפל סביביו שנאמר (בראשית א' ג) ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור, אמרו לו קודם יצירת ישראל בנך תעשה לו עטרה, א"ל הן, משל למה"ד למלך שהתארה לבן ומצא עטרה נאה קלוסה ומשובחת שמח שמחה ואמר זה לבני לראשו כי לו נאה, א"ל ויודע הוא שבנו ראוי, אמר שתוקי כך עלה במחשבה ונודע שנאמר (שמואל ב' י"ד יד) וחשב מחשבות וגו':

Rabbi Rechumai said: the light preceded the world, for cloud and thick darkness surround it, as it is said (Genesis 1:3), 'and God said, let there be light, and there was light.' They said to Him: before the formation of Israel Your son, will You make him a crown (atarah)? He said: yes. A parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who longed for a son, and found a fine crown, praised and excellent; he rejoiced greatly and said: this is for my son, for his head, for it befits him. They said to him: and does he know that his son is worthy? He said: be silent, thus it arose in thought, and it became known. As it is said (2 Samuel 14:14), 'and He devises plans, that none be cast out from Him.'

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the bet as the house of the world

The letter bet (ב), closed on three sides and open in front, is read as bayit (house): the Holy One is 'the place of the world' (a rabbinic epithet, Genesis Rabbah 68:9) while the world is not His place. Proverbs 24:3 ('by wisdom a house is built') makes the house built 'by wisdom', the world structured through Chokhmah, and answers why the Torah opens with bet (bereshit): creation begins with the letter of the 'house.'

the bet and the alef interlocked

An early instance of the Bahir's letter-mysticism, of a piece with the Sefer Yetzirah. The bet, like a man 'formed with wisdom', is closed on all sides and open in front; the alef (א) is open behind. The alef's rear-opening is joined to the 'tail' of the bet, so the two letters interlock, and the world 'endures' only through this joining, as a man endures only whole. The shapes of the letters are read as cosmic structure.

the primordial light and the crown

Rabbi Rechumai: the light preceded the world (Genesis 1:3), surrounded by 'cloud and thick darkness' (echoing Psalm 97:2,

where these surround God; the antecedent of ‘surround it’ hovers between the light and the Holy One). The crown (atarah) prepared for the King’s son (Israel) before Israel existed, the parable of the king who finds the crown first, teaches that the plan ‘arose in thought’ (machashavah) before its object was actual or worthy (2 Samuel 14:14, ‘He devises plans, that none be cast out from Him’). Sod: the atarah is the diadem, the Shekhinah / Malkhut as the crown of Israel, prepared in the pre-cosmic Thought; ‘be silent’ guards the mystery of an election that arises in thought before it is deserved.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 17-20; the order of the letters and the gimel that is a channel of grace

The Bahir's alphabet mysticism, from the order of *aleph*, *bet*, and *gimel* to the image that the later Kabbalah builds its whole emanation-language on: the *gimel* as a channel that draws from above and pours below. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim from Hebrew Wikisource (CC-BY-SA, via Sefaria; the underlying medieval text is itself public-domain by age); the standard modern English (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright; this edition offers an openly licensed English beside the Hebrew.

The translation here is **machine-assisted and provisional**, awaiting credentialed editor sign-off; corrections are welcomed. These sections turn almost entirely on the play of the letters' names and roots, so the play is preserved in transliteration and unpacked in the apparatus rather than silently resolved.



ישב ר׳ אמוראי ודרש למה אל״ף בראש, שהיא היתה קודמת לכל, ואפילו לתורה:

Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: Why is aleph at the head? Because it preceded everything: even the Torah.

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ולמה בי"ת קרובה לה, מפני שהיא היתה תחילה, ולמה יש לה זנב, להראות מאיזה מקום היתה, וי"א שמשם נתקיים העולם:

And why is bet near it? Because it was the beginning (teḥillah). And why does it have a tail? To show from what place it came; and some say, that from there the world is sustained (nitkayyem).

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ולמה גימ"ל שלישית, מפני שהיא שלישית, ולהודיע שהיא גומלת חסדים. והלוא ר' עקיבא אמר למה ג שלישית מפני שגומלת ומתגדלת ומתקיימת כמה דאת אמר (בראשית כא ח) ויגדל הילד ויגמל, א"ל הוא דבריי כי הוא

And why is gimel third? Because it is third, and to make known that it bestows kindnesses (gomelet ḥasadim). But did not Rabbi Akiva say: why is gimel third? Because it bestows (gomelet), and grows great (mitgaddelet), and endures (mitkayyemet), as it is said (Genesis

גודל וגומל חסד לשכנו עמו ואמון אצלו:

21:8), “and the child grew and was weaned (va-yigdal ha-yeled va-yiggamal)”? He said to him: that is my own meaning, for it grows great (godel) and bestows kindness (gomel ḥesed) upon its neighbor that dwells with it, and is a nursling (amon) beside it.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומפני מה יש לה זנב למטה לגימ”ל, אמר להם ראש יש לו לג’ למעלה ודומה לצינור, מה צינור זה שואב מלמעלה ומריק למטה אף ג שואבת דרך הראש ומריקה דרך הזנב והיינו ג:

And why does gimel have a tail below? He said to them: gimel has a head above, and it resembles a channel (tzinor). Just as a channel draws from above and empties below, so gimel draws through the head and empties through the tail, and that is gimel.

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aleph / rosh

Aleph “at the head” (*ba-rosh*), the first letter as the first of all things, prior even to the Torah (§17). *Rosh* (“head”) returns in §20 as the head of the gimel through which it draws from above.

bet / teḥillah / reshit

Bet as “the beginning” (*teḥillah*), continuing §3’s reading of *bet* as *reshit*. The letter’s tail (*zanav*) marks “from what place it came” (§18).

gimel / gomel / gamal / gadel

The root g-m-l heard at once as the letter *gimel*, *gomel* (“bestows,” as in *gemilut ḥasadim*, acts of kindness), *gamal* (“weans,” Genesis 21:8), and *gadel* (“grows great”). The homily makes bestowing, weaning, and growing one gesture (§19).

tzinor (צינור)

"Channel, pipe, conduit." The gimel's shape (head above, tail below) is read as a *tzinor* that "draws from above and empties below" (§20): the proto-image of the *tzinorot*, the channels of overflow (*shefa*) in later Kabbalah.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 21-22; the angels and the tree of All

From the angels to the tree. The dispute over when the angels were created, and why not on the first day, lest Michael and Gabriel seem to stretch the firmament as co-creators (§ 21, § 22a). Then the great image: God plants “this tree” for the world’s delight, spreads the All (kol) in it, names it “All,” and from it “the souls fly forth in joy”: the cosmic tree of §§ 118-119 and § 95, here bearing the name “All” (§ 22b).

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אמר ר' יוחנן בשני נבראו המלאכים דכתיב (תהלים ק"ד ג) המקרה במים עליותיו וכתיב (שם ד) עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט ואמר ר' לויטס בן טברוס הכל מודים ומודה ר' יוחנן דהמים כבר היו, אבל בשני המקרה במים עלי ותיו, ומי השם עבים רכובו, ומי המהלך על כנפי רוח, אבל שלוחים לא נבראו עד יום ה:

Rabbi Yochanan said: on the second day the angels were created, as it is written (Psalm 104:3), 'who roofs His upper chambers in the waters,' and it is written (ibid. 4), 'who makes His angels winds, His ministers a flaming fire.' And Rabbi Levitas ben Tavrus said: all agree, and Rabbi Yochanan concedes, that the waters already existed; but on the second day, 'He roofs His upper chambers in the waters, who sets the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind', yet the messengers were not created until the fifth day.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומודים הכל שלא נבראו ביום ראשון שלא יאמרו מיכאל היה מותח בדרומו של רקיע וגבריאל בצפונו והקב"ה סודר באמצעיתו, אלא אני ה' עושה כל נוטה שמים לבדי רוקע הארץ מאתי (ישעי' מ"ד כד) מי אתי כתיב אני הוא שנטעתי אילן זה להשתעשע בו כל העולם ורקעתי בו כל וקראתי שמו כל שהכל תלוי בו והכל יוצא ממנו, והכל צריכים לו, ובו צופים

And all agree that they were not created on the first day, lest one say: Michael was stretching out the south of the firmament and Gabriel the north, while the Holy One arranged the middle. Rather, 'I am the LORD who makes all, who stretches out the heavens alone, who spreads out the earth, who was with Me (mi iti)?' (Isaiah 44:24). 'from Me (me-iti)' is written, [read] 'who was with Me (mi iti)': I am He who planted this

tree that all the world might delight in it, and I spread out in it the All (kol), and I called its name 'All,' for the All depends on it, and the All comes forth from it, and all things need it, and to it they look, and for it they wait, and from there the souls fly forth in joy. Alone was I when I made it; and let no angel exalt himself over it to say, 'I preceded you', for even at the time when I spread out My earth, in which I planted and rooted this tree, and I rejoiced together, and I rejoiced in them: who was with Me, that I revealed to him this My secret?

ולו מחכין, ומשם פורחים הנשמות בשמחה, לבדי הייתי כשעשיתי אותו, ולא יגדל עליו מלאך לאמר אני קדמתי לך, כי גם בעת שרקעתי ארצי שבה נטעתי ושרשתי אילן זה ושמחתי ביחד ושמחתי בהם, מי אתי שגליתי לו סודי זה:

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▽

An orientation

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the angels created on the second day

The dispute over when the angels were made: Rabbi Yochanan sets it on the second day (Psalm 104:3-4, the firmament of the waters and the wind-and-fire ministers), while Rabbi Levitas ben Tavrus qualifies that the waters already existed and that the 'messengers' (shluchim, angels as sent ones) were not created until the fifth day (the day of the living creatures). Behind both stands the rabbinic ruling that angels were not created on the first day (Genesis Rabbah 1:3, 3:8), which § 22 then explains.

not on the first day: the anti-dualist point

Why the angels are withheld from day one: lest anyone imagine Michael stretching the southern side of the firmament and Gabriel the northern, with God merely arranging the middle, a polemic against a 'two powers' picture of creation. Isaiah 44:24 answers that God stretches the heavens 'alone (levadi).' The verse's 'me-iti' (from Me) is re-read as 'mi iti' (who was with Me?), the rhetorical question that frames the tree-secret that follows.

the tree of All (kol) and the flight of the souls

The heart of the passage: God plants ‘this tree’ for the delight of all the world, spreads ‘the All (kol)’ within it, and names it ‘All’, for all depends on it, all issues from it, all need it, all look to and wait for it, and ‘from there the souls fly forth in joy.’ Sod: this is the tree of the divine powers (the sefirot), whose channeling grade bears the name ‘All (kol)’; in the developed Kabbalah ‘All’ is Yesod, the righteous foundation (the tzaddik who is ‘kol’) through whom the overflow and the souls pass. It is the same cosmic tree drawn in Bahir §§ 118-119 (watered by Ḥokhmah, the souls flying to cleave to it) and set within the boundaries of space in § 95. The souls’ joyful flight presupposes their pre-existence in the tree.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 23-25; the order of creation

Three royal parables on the order of creation: the king who digs a spring of living water before planting his tree, so the tree endures (§ 23); the king who sets an object's base before naming it, so the earth is founded before the heavens and "olam va-ed" becomes a name (§ 24); and the king who sets aside his fine object until its place is ready, "let there be light, and there was light," for it already existed (§ 25).

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אמר ר' רחומאי מדברך נלמד שצורך העולם הזה ברא הקב"ה קודם השמים, א"ל הן, משל למה"ד למלך שביקש ליטע אילן בגנו, השגיח בכל הגן לדעת אם יש שם מעיין נובע מים להעמיד אותו, ולא מצא, אמר אחפור מים ואוציא מעין כדי שיוכל להתקיים האילן, חפר והוציא מעין נובע מים חיים ואח"כ נטע האילן ועמד ועשה פרי והצליח בשרשיו שהשקוהו תמיד מן המעיין:

Rabbi Rechumai said: from your words we learn that the Holy One created the need of this world before the heavens. He said to him: yes. A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who wished to plant a tree in his garden. He searched the whole garden to know whether there was a spring flowing with water to sustain it, and he found none. He said: I will dig for water and bring forth a spring, so that the tree may endure. He dug and brought forth a spring flowing with living water, and afterward he planted the tree; and it stood and bore fruit and thrived in its roots, for they watered it always from the spring.

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אמר ר' יאי הארץ נבראה קודם לשמים שנאמר (בראשית ב' ד) ארץ ושמים, אמרו לו והכתיב (בראשית א' א) את השמים ואת הארץ, אמר להם למה"ד למלך שקנה חפץ נאה ולא היה שלם ולא קרא עליו שם, אמר אשלימנו ואתקן כנו וחבורו, ואז אקרא לו שם הה"ד (תהלים ק"ב כו) לפנים

Rabbi Yanai said: the earth was created before the heavens, as it is said (Genesis 2:4), 'earth and heavens.' They said to him: but is it not written (Genesis 1:1), 'the heavens and the earth'? He said to them: a parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who bought a fine object, but it was not complete, and he did not name it.

He said: I will complete it, and set its base and its joining, and then I will give it a name. This is what is written (Psalm 102:26), 'of old You founded the earth, and afterward the heavens are the work of Your hands.' And it says (ibid. 104:2-3), 'wrapped in light as a garment, stretching out the heavens like a curtain, who roofs His upper chambers in the waters,' and it says (ibid. 4), 'who makes His angels winds, His ministers a flaming fire,' and afterward (ibid. 5), 'He founded the earth on its bases, that it should not totter forever and ever (bal timot olam va-ed).' When He had fixed a base for it, then He made it firm, as it is said, 'that it should not totter.' And what is its name? 'va-ed' is its name, and its base is 'olam,' and this is 'olam va-ed.'

הארץ יסדת ואח"כ ומעשה ידיך שמים, ואומר (שם ק"ד ב) עטה אור כשלמה נוטה שמים כיריעה המקרה במים עליותיו וגו', ואומר (שם ד) עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש לוהט, ואח"כ (שם ה) יסד ארץ על מכוניה בל תמוט עולם ועד, כשתיקן לה מכון אז האמין בה שנאמר בל תמוט, ומה שמה ועד שמה ומכונה עולם והיינו עולם ועד:

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Rabbi Berakhiah said: what is written (Genesis 1:3), 'and God said, let there be light, and there was light (va-yehi or)', and not 'and it would be light (ve-haya or)'? A parable to a king who had a fine object, and set it aside until he had

אמר ר' ברכיה מאי דכתיב (בראשית א, ג) ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור, ולא והיה אור, משל למלך שהיה לו חפץ נאה והקצהו עד שזימן לו מקום ושמהו שם

הה"ד יהי אור ויהי אור שכבר היה:	prepared for it a place, and placed it there. This is what is written, 'let there be light, and there was light', for it already existed.

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the spring dug before the tree

Rabbi Rechumai draws out that the ‘need of this world’ precedes the heavens: the parable of the king who, before planting his tree, first digs a spring of living water to sustain it. Sod: the spring is the higher grade that must flow before the tree of the powers can stand and bear fruit, the same figure as Bahir §§ 118-119, where the cosmic tree is ‘watered by Ḥokhmah.’ The tree endures only because it is ‘watered always from the spring’: the sefirotic tree depends on the constant overflow from above.

earth before heaven; olam va-ed

Rabbi Yanai reconciles the two creation verses, Genesis 2:4 ('earth and heavens') against Genesis 1:1 ('heavens and earth'), with the king who completes and sets the base of a fine object before naming it: the earth (the base) is founded first (Psalm 102:26; Psalm 104:2-5), and only when its 'base' is fixed is it made firm ('that it should not totter'). The closing wordplay reads Psalm 104:5's 'olam va-ed' (forever and ever) as a name: 'va-ed' is the name and 'olam' the base, the enduring foundation on which the world is set firm.

let there be light: the pre-existent light

Rabbi Berakhiah presses the grammar of Genesis 1:3: 'let there be light, and there was (va-yehi) light': not 'and it would be (ve-haya) light.' The past-tense 'va-yehi' ('and there was'), not the would-be 've-haya' the Bahir rejects, shows the light already existed; the king merely 'set aside' his fine object until a place was ready, then set it there. This is the primordial light of § 16, the light that 'preceded the world,' brought into place rather than made anew.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 26; the LORD is a man of war (the letters of Ish)

An anthropomorphism read as letters: “the LORD is a man (ish) of war” (Exodus 15:3) unfolded through the three letters of ish, alef, yod, shin: as a king’s three finest dwellings, gathered into “one name” and “one house.” Alef is the head, Yod second to it, and Shin “includes the whole world,” because teshuvah (repentance) is written with a shin.

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אמר ר' אמוראי מאי דכתיב (שמות ט"ו ג) ה' איש מלחמה, אמר ליה מר רחומאי ברבי לא תבעי לך מילתא דפשיטא, שמע לי ואמלכינך, א"ל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו דירות נאות ושם שם לכל אחד ואחד מהם וכולן זו טובה מזו, אמר אתן לבני דירה זו ששמה אל"ף, גם זו טובה ששמה יו"ד גם זו טובה ששמה שי"ן, מה עשה אספן כל השלשה ועשה מהם שם אחד ועשה מהם בית אחד, א"ל עד מתי תסתום דבריך, א"ל בני אל"ף ראש, יו"ד שני לה, שי"ן כולל כל העולם, ולמה שי"ן כולל כל העולם מפני שכתוב בה תשובה:

Rabbi Amorai said: what is written (Exodus 15:3), 'the LORD is a man of war (ish milchamah)'? Mar Rechumai the elder said to him: do not ask about a plain matter, listen to me and I will advise you. He said to him: a parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who had fine dwellings, and to each and every one of them he gave a name, and all of them were good, one better than the other. He said: I will give my son this dwelling, whose name is Alef; also this good one, whose name is Yod; also this good one, whose name is Shin. What did he do? He gathered the three of them, and made from them one name, and made from them one house (bayit). He said to him: how long will you seal up your words? He said to him: my son: Alef is the head, Yod is second to it, Shin includes the whole world. And why does Shin include the whole world? Because 'teshuvah (repentance)' is written with it.

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the LORD is a man of war: the letters of Ish

Rabbi Amorai reads Exodus 15:3 ('the LORD is a man of war') not as anthropomorphism but as letters: the three letters of ish (אִישׁ, 'man'), alef, yod, shin, are the king's three finest 'dwellings,' gathered into 'one name' and 'one house.' Each is a grade: Alef is the head (the first, later Keter), Yod is second to it (the yod of the divine name, Ḥokhmah), and Shin includes the whole world (Binah). The divine 'Man' of Exodus 15:3 is thus the configuration of the three highest grades, the Bahir's letter-mysticism applied to the anthropos-name, defusing the anthropomorphism into structure.

why shin includes the whole world: teshuvah

The reason given for shin's all-inclusion: 'teshuvah (repentance)' is written with a shin. In the Kabbalah teshuvah (return) is the domain of Binah, the world-encompassing upper Mother, the

‘world to come,’ the source of the return that sustains the world, and the three-pronged shin figures this all-including grade. To say the shin ‘includes the whole world’ is to read the letter as Binah, the place to which all returns.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 27-30; the ten kings, the two heh's, and the vav of the six directions

The Bahir's alphabet mysticism through *dalet*, *heh*, and *vav*: the ten kings and the "poor" tenth, the two heh's of the divine name, and the *vav* read as the six directions that seal the world. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim from Hebrew Wikisource (CC-BY-SA, via Sefaria; the underlying medieval text is itself public-domain by age); the standard modern English (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright; this edition offers an openly licensed English beside the Hebrew.

The translation here is **machine-assisted and provisional**, awaiting credentialed editor sign-off. One caution stated up front: **§28 is a recognized textual crux**, its syntax is broken and its sense disputed, and the rendering there is offered as a literal best-effort with the difficulty flagged, not as a settled reading.

שאלו לו תלמידיו מהו דלי"ת, א"ל מלה"ד לעשרה מלכים שהיו במקום אחד, וכלם עשירים, ואחד מהם עשיר אך לא כאחד מהם, אע"פ שעשרו גדול דל נקרא לגבי העשירים:

His students asked him: What is dalet (ד)? He said to them: a parable, to what is it compared? To ten kings who were in one place, and all of them were rich, and one of them was rich, but not like one of them [the others]; even though his wealth is great, he is called "poor" (dal) in relation to the [other] rich ones.

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אמרו לו מה ה"א, כעס ואמר להם לא אמרתי לכם לא תשאלו לי על דבר אחרון ואח"כ על הראשון,

They said to him: What is heh (ה)? He grew angry and said to them: Did I not tell you not to ask me about a later thing and afterward

about an earlier one? They said to him: but the heh is written last [in the order]. He said to them: it would have been fitting to write gimel-heh; yet why was gimel-dalet written, given that he should have written dalet-heh? And why did he write gimel-dalet? He said to them: they interchange, the gimel in the place of the dalet; in its head, in the place of the heh; the dalet, in its point (qotz), in the place of the heh.

אמרו לו וה"א אחרון כתובה, אמר להם ראוי הוא להיכתב גימ"ל ה"א ועל מה נכתב גימ"ל דלי"ת מפני שהיה לו לכתוב דלי"ת ה"א, ומפני מה כתב גימל דלית, אמר להם נחלפים הגימל במקום דלית בראשה במקום ה"א דלי"ת בקוצה מקום ה"א:

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What is heh? He said: a lower heh and an upper heh.

מאי ה"א, אמר ה"א תחתונה וה"א עליונה:

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אמרו לו מאי וא"ו, אמר להם בששה קצוות נחתם העולם, אמרו לו והלא ו' אחת, אמר להם והלא כתוב (תהלים ק"ד ב) עוטה אור כשלמה:

They said to him: What is vav (ו)? He said to them: with six extremities the world is sealed (be-shishah ketzavot neḥtam ha-olam). They said to him: but the vav is one. He said to them: but is it not written (Psalm 104:2), "wrapped in light as a garment (oteh or ka-salmah)"?

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dalet / dal

The name of the letter *dalet* heard as *dal*, “poor”: the tenth king, rich yet poor relative to the rest, possessing nothing of its own (§27). The proto-image of *Malkhut*.

gimel / dalet / heh (the forms)

§28 turns on the shared written *forms* of ג, ד, ה, an upright, a “head” (*rosh*), a small point (*qotz*), and their interchange. A recognized crux; the reading is unsettled and flagged as such.

two heh’s

The divine name יהוה has two heh’s; the Bahir’s “lower heh and upper heh” (§29) is the germ of the later pairing of *Binah* (upper) and *Malkhut* / Shekhinah (lower).

vav = six

Vav, numerical value six, read as the six “extremities” (*ketzavot*) that seal the world (§30): the six directions of *Sefer Yetzirah*, later the six sefirot of construction.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 31-33; the et of creation and the fallen glory

The Garden of Eden set “on the earth” (§ 31); the two “et” particles of Genesis 1:1 that keep heaven and earth from being read as deities, amplifying instead to include the sun, moon, stars, trees, grasses, and Eden (§ 32); and the objection from Lamentations 2:1, the cast-down “glory (tiferet) of Israel”: answered by the king who sheds his crown and garment on bad news, an early figure of the exile of the glory (§ 33).

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אמר ר' אמוראי גן עדן היכן הוא, א"ל בארץ:

Rabbi Amorai said: where is the Garden of Eden? He said to him: on the earth.

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דרש ר' ישמעאל לר' עקיבא מאי דכתיב (בראשית א' א) את השמים ואת הארץ, אלמלא לא נאמר את היינו אומרים שמים וארץ אלהות הן, אמר לו העבודה נגעת אבל לא בררת, כן דברת, אבל את לרבות חמה ולבנה כוכבים ומזלות, ואת לרבות אילנות ודשאים וגן עדן:

Rabbi Ishmael expounded to Rabbi Akiva: what is written (Genesis 1:1), 'the heavens and the earth (et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-aretz)'? Had 'et' not been said, we would have said the heavens and the earth are deities. He said to him: by the Temple service! You have touched the matter but not sifted it. So you have spoken, but 'et (את)' is to include the sun and the moon, the stars and the constellations; and 'et' is to include the trees and the grasses and the Garden of Eden.

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אמרו לו הכתיב (איכה ב' א) השליך משמים ארץ תפארת

They said to him: but is it not written (Lamentations 2:1), 'He

ישראל וא"כ נפלו, אמר להם אם קרו לא שנו ואם שנו לא שלשו, מלה"ד למלך שהיה לו עטרה נאה על ראשו מלת נאה בכתפיו ובא לו שמועה רעה השליך העטרה מעל ראשו והמלך מלפניו:

cast down from heaven to earth the glory (tiferet) of Israel', and if so, they fell? He said to them: if they befell, they did not repeat it; and if they repeated it, they did not do it a third time. A parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who had a fine crown on his head and a fine garment on his shoulders; and bad news came to him, so he cast the crown from off his head and the garment from before him.

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the Garden of Eden and the ‘et’ of creation

§ 31 places the Garden of Eden ‘on the earth’, a real terrestrial locus, not only a celestial one. § 32 stages Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva on the two ‘et’ particles of Genesis 1:1: without them, ‘heaven and earth’ might be read as independent powers or deities (the same two-powers worry as § 22). The particle ‘et’

(the accusative marker that Rabbi Akiva's midrash treats as amplifying, 'to include') gathers the sun, moon, stars, and constellations under 'the heavens,' and the trees, grasses, and Garden of Eden under 'the earth.' The Bahir has Akiva correct Ishmael with the et-amplification that is Akiva's signature method.

the fallen glory (tiferet) of Israel

Lamentations 2:1, 'He cast down from heaven to earth the tiferet (glory, beauty) of Israel', is raised as an objection: did the heavens, or the glory, then fall? The answer limits the fall ('if they befell, they did not repeat it'). The parable of the king who, on bad news, casts off both his crown and his garment gives the sod: Tiferet, the glory and beauty of Israel (a divine grade), together with the crown (the diadem, Malkhut) and the garment, are the adornment withdrawn in exile, an early figure of the exile of the divine glory. Textual note: the source's closing 've-ha-melekh mi-lefanav' ('and the king from before him') is most likely a scribal slip for 've-ha-mal't mi-lefanav' ('and the garment from before him'), matching the 'fine garment on his shoulders' above; rendered accordingly.

Editorial decisions

- **ve-ha-melekh / ve-ha-mal’t.** Rendered the closing clause as ‘the garment from before him,’ reading the source’s ‘ve-ha-melekh’ (the king) as a scribal slip for ‘ve-ha-mal’t’ (the garment), per the parallel ‘fine garment on his shoulders’; flagged in the apparatus. *(provisional draft, 2026-07-01)*

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 34-35; the chet, the north, and the intercessor

A letter and a parable on the origin of good and evil. The chet, shaped as a pataḥ (an “opening”), figures the north, the one open direction, open to good and to evil: the source of the destructive fire and wrath, yet where “the attribute of mercy rolls and turns about” when Israel is worthy (§ 34). The turn is dramatized as intercession: a governor vouches for the king’s servants as their surety, and the king’s wrath subsides (§ 35).

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שאלו לו מפני מה חי"ת צורת פתח ונקודה בפתח קטן, א"ל מפני שכל הרוחות סתומות חוץ מפאת צפון שהוא פתוחה לטוב ולרע, א"ל לטובה והכתיב (יחזקאל א' ד) והנה רוח סערה באה מן הצפון ענן גדול אש מתלקחת, ואין' אש אלא חרון אף דכתיב (ויקרא י' ב') ותצא אש מלפני ה' ותאכל אותם וימותו, א"ל לא קשיא כאן בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום כאן כשאין ישראל עושין רצונו, בזמן שאין ישראל עושין רצונו אש קרובה, ובזמן שעושין רצונו מדת הרחמים מתגלגלת וסובבת הה"ד (מיכה ז' יח) נושא עון ועובר על פשע:

They asked him: why is the chet (ח) [in] the shape of a pataḥ (an opening), with a point in a small pataḥ? He said to them: because all the directions are closed except the north side, which is open to good and to evil. He said to him: to good? But is it not written (Ezekiel 1:4), 'and behold, a storm wind came from the north, a great cloud and a fire flashing up'? And 'fire' is nothing but the burning of wrath (ḥaron af), as it is written (Leviticus 10:2), 'and fire went out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died.' He said to him: it is no difficulty: here, at the time when Israel does the will of the Omnipresent; there, when Israel does not do His will. At the time when Israel does not do His will, the fire is near; and at the time when they do His will, the attribute of mercy (midat ha-raḥamim) rolls and turns about, as it is written (Micah 7:18), 'who bears iniquity and passes over transgression.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

משל למה"ד למלך שרצה לרדות את עבדיו וליסרם, עמד הגמון אחד ושאל על מה, אמר לו על כן, א"ל לא עשו עבדיך דבר זה מעולם ואני ערב לך בהם ואתה תבדוק אחריהם, בין כך ובין כך שככה חמת המלך:

A parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who wished to chastise his servants and discipline them. A certain governor (hegemon) arose and asked: on what account? He said to him: on such an account. He said to him: your servants never did this thing, and I am a surety for them; and you, examine after them. In the meanwhile, the king's wrath subsided.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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the chet, the pataḥ, and the open north

Letter-and-vowel mysticism: the chet (ח) is figured as ‘open’, its form tied to the pataḥ, which is at once ‘an opening’ and the

name of a vowel. All the directions are closed except the north, which is 'open (pataḥ) to good and to evil.' The north is the source of the destructive fire (Ezekiel 1:4's storm from the north; Leviticus 10:2's consuming fire, glossed as ḥaron af, the burning of wrath) but also, when Israel does God's will, of mercy. Sod: the north is the side of Gevurah / din (severe judgment, in the later Kabbalah the root of the 'other side'), open to either outcome according to Israel's deeds.

mercy that rolls and turns; the intercessor

The resolution: the fire is 'near' when Israel does not do God's will, but when they do, 'the attribute of mercy (midat ha-raḥamim) rolls and turns about' (Micah 7:18, 'who bears iniquity and passes over transgression'). § 35 dramatizes this as a parable of intercession: the king is about to punish his servants, but a governor (hegemon) stands as their surety and vouches that they never did the thing, and 'the king's wrath subsided.' Sod: mercy, the grade of Tiferet/raḥamim on the central column: turns the northern fire aside, and the advocate (the righteous intercessor, the tzaddik) defers judgment through his suretyship.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 36-40; the gates of Zion and the vowel-points

The vowel-points and the gates, read together on the origin of good and evil. The dalet and the pataḥ ("an opening") identified with the north, where "from the gate whence the evil goes out, the good goes out" (§§ 36-37); the gates of Zion loved "because they are on the side of evil," and the return that turns them to good loved more than the peace of Jacob's tents (§§ 38-39); and the cholam, the vowel read as the soul that heals or sickens the body (§ 40).

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שאלו תלמידיו ואמרו מפני מה דלי"ת עבה מן הצד, אמר להם מפני הסגו"ל שהוא בפתח וקטן שנאמר (תהלים כד ז) פתחי עולם, שם שם פתח למעלה וסגול למטה ובאה עבה:

His students asked and said: why is the dalet (ד) thick on the side? He said to them: because of the segol, which is a pataḥ and small, as it is said (Psalm 24:7), 'the everlasting doors (pitchei olam).' There he placed a pataḥ above and a segol below, and it came out thick.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

מאי פתח, פתח, ומאי פתח, הוא רוח צפונית שהוא פתח לכל העולם, מן השער שיצא הרע יוצא הטוב, ומה טוב, לגלג עליהם הלא אמרתי לכם פתח קטן, אמרו לו שכחנו שנה לנו, שנה אמר להם למה"ד למלך שהיה לו כסא לפעמים לוקח אותו בזרועו ולפעמים על ראשו, א"ל למה, לפי שהוא נאה וחס לישב עליו, א"ל ואנא שמו על ראשו, אמר להם במ"ם פתוחה שנאמר (תהלים פ"ה יב) אמת מארץ תצמח וצדק משמים נשקף:

What is pataḥ? An opening (pataḥ). And what is pataḥ? It is the north wind, which is an opening to the whole world. From the gate whence the evil goes out, the good goes out. And what is 'good'? He mocked them: did I not tell you, a small pataḥ? They said to him: we have forgotten; teach us again. He taught again. He said to them: a parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a throne; sometimes he takes it upon his arm, and sometimes upon his head. He said to him: why? Because it is fine, and it is too dear to sit upon. He said to him: and where does he set it? Upon his head. He said to them: in an open mem (mem petuḥah), as it is said

(Psalm 85:12), ‘truth springs up from the earth, and tzedek looks down from heaven.‘

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ישב ר’ אמוראי ודרש מאי דכתיב (תהלים פ”ז ב) אוהב ה’ שערי ציון מכל משכנות יעקב, שערי ציון הם פתחי עולם, ואין שער אלא פתח כמד”א פתח לנו שערי רחמים, כך אמר הקב”ה אוהב אני שערי ציון כשהן פתוחין, למה, שהן מצד הרעה, וכשישראל טובים לפני המקום וראוים להפתח לטוב הקב”ה אוהבם מכל משכנות יעקב שהם כולם שלום שנאמר (בראשית כה כז) ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים:

Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: what is written (Psalm 87:2), ‘the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob’? The gates of Zion are the everlasting doors (pitchei olam); and ‘gate’ is nothing but an opening (petaḥ), as one says, ‘open for us the gates of mercy.’ Thus said the Holy One: I love the gates of Zion when they are open. Why? Because they are on the side of evil; and when Israel are good before the Omnipresent and worthy to be opened to good, the Holy One loves them more than all the dwellings of Jacob, which are all peace, as it is said (Genesis 25:27), ‘and Jacob was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents.‘

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

משל לשני בני אדם אחד מזומן לעשות רעה ועשה טובה, ואחד מזומן לעשות טובה ועשה טובה, למי משבחין יותר למי שרגיל לעשות רע ועשה טוב, אולי יעשה פעם שניה הה"ד (תהלים פ"ז ב) אוהב ה' שערי ציון מכל משכנות יעקב שהן כולם שלום שנאמר (בראשית כ"ה כז) ויעקב איש תם ישב אהלים:

A parable of two men: one disposed to do evil, and he did good; and one disposed to do good, and he did good. Whom do we praise the more? The one accustomed to do evil, and did good: perhaps he will do so a second time. This is what is written (Psalm 87:2), 'the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' which are all peace, as it is said (Genesis 25:27), 'and Jacob was a wholesome man, dwelling in tents.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

שאלו תלמידיו מהו חולם, א"ל נשמה ושמה חולם שאם תשמע תחלים גופך לעתיד לבוניו ואם תמרוד בה ישובו חלאיך בראשך וחלים בראשה:

His students asked: what is ḥolam? He said to them: a soul (neshamah), and its name is ḥolam; for if you listen (tishma), you will heal (taḥlim) your body in the time to come; and if you rebel against it, your sicknesses (ḥalayikh) will return upon your head, and sickness upon its head.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

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the vowel-points and the openings

Vowel-and-letter mysticism: the dalet's thickness is explained by the placing of a pataḥ above and a segol below (§ 36), and 'pataḥ'

is at once ‘an opening’ and the name of a vowel. § 37 identifies the pataḥ with the north wind, ‘an opening to the whole world’ (Psalm 24:7’s ‘everlasting doors,’ pitchei olam). The crux is stated plainly: ‘from the gate whence the evil goes out, the good goes out’, the same northern opening emits both. The throne carried ‘on the arm’ or ‘on the head,’ set at last upon the head ‘in an open mem,’ with Psalm 85:12 (‘truth springs from the earth, tzedek looks down from heaven’), figures the raising of the good/glory above; the passage is dense and its letter-and-vowel mechanics are not fully transparent.

the gates of Zion, loved because on the side of evil

§§ 38-39 draw the theology out of § 37’s crux. Psalm 87:2 (‘the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob’) is read with ‘gate’ as ‘opening’: the gates of Zion are ‘on the side of evil,’ and precisely when Israel, being worthy, turn them ‘to good,’ God loves them more than the peaceful dwellings of Jacob (Genesis 25:27). The parable of the two men clinches it, the one habituated to evil who does good is praised more than the one always good, ‘perhaps he will do so again.’ Sod: the redemption of the northern, severe side through teshuvah; the greater love is for the return that turns evil to good (cf. §§ 34-35, the north open to good and evil).

the ḥolam and the soul

The vowel ḥolam (חולם) is glossed as the soul (neshamah): heed it, 'if you listen (tishma)', and 'it will heal (taḥlim) your body in the time to come'; rebel, and 'your sicknesses (ḥalayikh) will return upon your head.' The wordplay turns on the roots ח-ל-ם (ḥolam / heal / dream) and ח-ל-ה (to be sick). Textual note: the source's 'le-vonav' in 'you will heal your body in the future le-vonav' is obscure and most likely a scribal variant of 'lavo' (le-atid lavo, 'the time to come'); rendered accordingly.

Editorial decisions

- **le-vonav / lavo.** Rendered § 40's 'le-vonav' as 'in the time to come,' reading the source's obscure 'le-vonav' as a scribal variant of 'lavo' (le-atid lavo); flagged in the apparatus. *(provisional draft, 2026-07-01)*

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 41-44; the chirik and the charak

The vowel-points, in their severe register. The cholam gathers the root ח-ל-ם, the dream, the vowel, and the amethyst (§ 41); and the chirik, the point below the letter, "hates the wicked and chastises them," unfolded through a chain of "do not read X but Y" readings on charaq: distance (rachaq), bald/clearing (qarach), and the fire that consumes all fires (§§ 42-44). The severe point distances, clears, and burns.

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ועוד אמרו שכל חלום הוא בחולם, וכל מרגלית לבנה הוא בחלם כדכתיב (שמות כ"ח יט) ואחלמה:

And further they said: every dream (ḥalom) is in [the vowel] ḥolam, and every white pearl is in ḥalam, as it is written (Exodus 28:19), 'and an amethyst (aḥlamah).'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

אמר להם עולו ושמעו דקדוקי נקודה דאורייתא דמשה. ישב ודרש להם חיריק שונא את הרעים ומייסרם, ובצדו הקנאה והשנאה והתחרות דכתיב (תהלים ל"ז יב) וחרק עליו שניו אל תקרי חרק אלא רחק, רחק אלה המדות ממך ויתרחק ממך הרע, וכל שכן דהטוב ידבק בך:

He said to them: come in and hear the fine points of the vocalization of the Torah of Moses. He sat and expounded to them: the ḥirik hates the wicked and chastises them, and at its side are jealousy and hatred and rivalry, as it is written (Psalm 37:12), 'and he gnashed (ḥaraq) his teeth against him': do not read ḥaraq but raḥaq (distance): distance these traits from yourself, and the evil will be distanced from you, and all the more will the good cleave to you.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

חרק אל תקרי חרק אלא קרח, אלא כל מקום שדבק חרק נשאר קרח שנאמר (שמות ל"ד ז) ונקה:

Ḥaraq: do not read ḥaraq but qaraḥ (bald): rather, every place to which the gnashing (ḥaraq) clings, it is left bald (qaraḥ), as it is said (Exodus 34:7), 'and clearing (ve-naqeh).'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ומאי משמע דהאי חרק לשון שורף משום דהיא אש שורפת כל האשות דכתיב (מ"א י"ח לח) ותפול אש ה' ותאכל את העולה ואת העצים ואת האבנים ואת העפר, ואת המים אשר בתעלה לחכה:

And how do we know that this ḥaraq is a term of burning? Because it is a fire that burns all fires, as it is written (1 Kings 18:38), 'and the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



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the ḥolam, the dream, and the pearl

Continuing § 40's ḥolam-as-soul: 'every dream (ḥalom) is in ḥolam,' and 'every white pearl is in ḥalam', the aḥlamah, the amethyst set in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:19). The vowel gathers the cluster of the root ח-ל-ם (ḥolam / dream / the gem): the soul's vowel is linked at once to vision (the dream) and to the precious stone.

the ḥirik and the ḥaraq: the severe point

The ḥirik (a vowel-point written below the letter) is the severe point that 'hates the wicked and chastises them,' flanked by jealousy, hatred, and rivalry, the vowel of judgment, of a piece with the northern / Gevurah severity of §§ 34-35. Its sense is unfolded by a chain of al-tikri readings on ḥaraq (חרק, 'to gnash,' Psalm 37:12): read raḥaq (רחק, 'distance'), distance these traits and the evil is distanced, the good cleaves (§ 42); read qaraḥ (קרח, 'bald, bare'), where the gnashing clings, baldness or a clearing remains (Exodus 34:7, ve-naqeh, § 43); and ḥaraq as burning: the fire that consumes all fires, licking up even the water in the trench (1 Kings 18:38, Elijah on Carmel, § 44). The severe point purges: it distances evil, clears it away, and burns it.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 45-48; the seven voices of Sinai

The Sinai revelation read as seven voices. “And all the people *saw* the voices” (Exodus 20:15) unfolded through the seven “voice of the LORD” of Psalm 29, the Torah “given in seven voices,” in the developed reading the seven lower sefirot, with the fifth voice “making peace between the water and the fire” (§ 45); the fire on earth and the voices in heaven (§ 46); “an image, but not all an image,” the king seen in his garment but not his throat (§ 47); and the ten utterances gathered into one, lest Israel imagine angelic helpers (§ 48).

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Mar said: what is written (Exodus 20:15), ‘and all the people saw the voices (kolot) and the torches’? Can voices be seen? Rather, ‘and all the people saw the voices’, those voices that David spoke of (Psalm 29:3): ‘the voice of the LORD is upon the waters, the God of glory thunders,’ and so forth. ‘The voice of the LORD in power’, and it says (Isaiah 10:13), ‘by the power of my hand I have done it,’ and it says (ibid. 48:13), ‘also my hand founded the earth.’ ‘The voice of the LORD in majesty’, and Scripture said (Psalm 111:3), ‘majesty and splendor is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.’ ‘The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars’ (Psalm 29:5), this is the bow that breaks the cypress-trees and the cedar-trees. ‘The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire’ (ibid. 7), this is the one who makes peace between the water and the fire, who hews out the power of the fire and prevents it from licking up the water, and also prevents them from extinguishing it. ‘The voice of the LORD makes the wilderness tremble’ (ibid. 8), as it is said (Psalm 18:51), ‘and he does lovingkindness to his anointed, to David and to his seed forever,’ more than the wilderness. ‘The voice of the LORD makes the

אמר מר מאי דכתיב (שמות כ’ ט”ו) וכל העם רואים את הקולות ואת הלפידים, וכי נראים קולות, אלא וכל העם רואים את הקולות אותן קולות שאמר דוד (תהלים כ”ט ג) קול ה’ על המים אל הכבוד הרעים ה’ גו’ קול ה’ בכח ואומר (ישעיה י’ יג) בכח ידי עשיתי, ואומר (שם מ”ח יג) אף ידי יסדה ארץ, קול ה’ בהדר ואמר קרא (תהלים קי”א ג) הוד והדר פעלו וצדקתו עומדת לעד, קול ה’ שובר ארזים (שם כ”ט ה) זה קשת שמשברת עצי ברושים ועצי ארזים, קול ה’ חוצב להבות אש (שם ז) זה שעושה שלום בין המים ובין האש, שחוצב כח האש ומונע אותו מללחוך המים וגם מונען מלכבותו, קול ה’ יחיל מדבר (שם ח) שנאמר (שם י”ח נ”א) ועושה חסד למשיחו לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם, יותר מן המדבר, קול ה’ יחולל אילות ויחשוף יערות ובהיכלו כולו אומר כבוד (שם כ”ט ט), וכתיב (שה”ש ב’ ז) השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלים בצבאות או באילות השדה, הא למדת שבשבע קולות ניתנה תורה, ובכלם נגלה אדון העולם עליהם וראוהו והיינו דכתיב וכל העם רואים את הקולות:

hinds calve and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all say: glory' (ibid. 9), and it is written (Song of Songs 2:7), 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field.' You have thus learned that the Torah was given in seven voices, and in each of them the Lord of the world was revealed to them and they saw him; and this is what is written, 'and all the people saw the voices.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

כתוב אחד אומר (שמואל ב כ"ב י) ויט שמים וירד וערפל תחת רגליו, וכתוב אחד אומר (שמות י"ט כ) וירד ה' על הר סיני אל ראש ההר, וכתוב אחד אומר (שם כ' י"ט) כי מן השמים דברתי עמכם, הא כיצד. אשו הגדולה היתה בארץ שהוא קול אחד ושאר הקולות היו בשמים דכתיב (דברים ד' לו) מן השמים השמיעך את קולו ליסרך ועל הארץ הראך את אשו הגדולה ודבריו שמעת מתוך האש, ומאי היא הגדולה, ומאין היה יוצא

One verse says (2 Samuel 22:10), 'and he bent the heavens and came down, and thick darkness was under his feet'; and one verse says (Exodus 19:20), 'and the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain'; and one verse says (ibid. 20:19), 'for from the heavens I spoke with you.' How is this [reconciled]? The great fire was on the earth, that is one voice, and the rest of the voices were in the heavens, as it is written (Deuteronomy 4:36), 'from the heavens he made you hear his voice, to discipline you, and upon the earth he showed you his great

הדיבור מתוך האש שנאמר (שם) ודבריו שמעת מתוך האש:

fire, and his words you heard from the midst of the fire.' And what is 'the great [fire]'? And from where did the speech go out from the midst of the fire? As it is said (ibid.), 'and his words you heard from the midst of the fire.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי ותמונה אינכם רואים זולתי קול (דברים ד' יב) ההוא כדאמר להם משה לישראל (שם ט"ו) כי לא ראיתם כל תמונה, תמונה ולא כל תמונה. משל למה"ד למלך שעומד על עבדיו מעוטף כסות לבנה לא די לאימת מלכות שיסתכלו במלבושיו, ועוד רחוק היה המלך ושמעו את קולו, יכולים לראות גרונו, אמרת לא, הא למדת שראו תמונה ולא כל תמונה. והיינו דכתיב (שם) ותמונה אינכם רואים זולתי קול, וכתיב (שם) קול דברים אתם שומעים:

And what is 'and you saw no image, only a voice' (Deuteronomy 4:12)? That is as Moses said to Israel (ibid. 4:15), 'for you saw no image (temunah).' An image, but not all an image. A parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who stands over his servants, wrapped in a white garment. Is it not enough, for the awe of kingship, that they gaze upon his garments? And moreover, the king was far off, and they heard his voice, can they see his throat? You would say: no. You have thus learned that they saw an image, but not all an image. And this is what is written, 'and you saw no image, only a voice,' and it is written (ibid.), 'a voice of words you were hearing.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

כתוב אחד אומר (שמות כ' טו) וכל העם רואים את הקולות, וכתוב אחד אומר (דברים ד' יב) קול דברים אתם שומעים, הא כיצד, בתחילה רואים את הקולות. ומה ראו שבע קולות שאמר דוד. ולבסוף שמעו הדיבור היוצא מבין כולם. והא אנן עשרה תנן, דרבנן אמרו כולהו אמירן בחדא מילתא, כן כולה אמירן בחדא מילתא, והוי שבע אמירן דשבעה קולות, ועל תלתא מנייהו נאמר קול דברים אתם שומעים ותמונה אינכם רואים זולתי קול, הא למדת דכולהו בחדא מילתא אמירן, ובעבור שלא יטעו ישראל לומר אחרים עזרוהו או אחד מן המלאכים אך קולו לבד לא יוכל להיות חזק כל כך, בעבור כן חזר וכללן:

One verse says (Exodus 20:15), 'and all the people saw the voices,' and one verse says (Deuteronomy 4:12), 'a voice of words you were hearing.' How is this [reconciled]? At first they saw the voices. And what did they see? The seven voices that David spoke of. And in the end they heard the speech (dibbur) going out from among them all. But have we not learned [that there are] ten? For the rabbis said: all of them were spoken in a single utterance. Just so, all of them were spoken in a single utterance; and they are seven utterances of the seven voices; and concerning three of them it is said, 'a voice of words you were hearing, and you saw no image, only a voice.' You have thus learned that all of them were spoken in a single utterance. And so that Israel would not err and say, 'others helped him, or one of the angels, but his voice alone cannot be so strong', for this reason he went back and included them all.

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An orientation

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the seven voices of Sinai

’And all the people saw the voices’ (Exodus 20:15), can voices be seen?, is read through the seven ‘voice of the LORD (kol H’)’ of Psalm 29, each glossed by a divine act (upon the waters; in power; in majesty; breaking cedars; hewing fire; shaking the wilderness; making the hinds calve, with ‘all say glory’ in his temple). ‘The Torah was given in seven voices.’ Sod: the seven voices are the seven lower sefirot, the seven of the divine structure (Ḥesed through Malkhut), through which the Lord was revealed at Sinai; the visible ‘voices’ are the manifest grades. The interwoven prooftexts (Isaiah 10:13 and 48:13 on the ‘hand/power’; Psalm 111:3 on majesty and righteousness; Psalm 18:51 on lovingkindness to David; Song of Songs 2:7 on the hinds) tie each voice to a scriptural anchor.

the voice that makes peace between water and fire

'The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire' (Psalm 29:7) is read as the grade that 'makes peace between the water and the fire', hewing the power of the fire so it neither licks up the water nor is quenched by it. This is the reconciling central grade (Tiferet) that holds the opposed elements in balance, the same water-and-fire polarity figured by Michael and Gabriel in §§ 11-12; the fifth voice's 'peace' (Psalm 29:7) is the harmony of the tree.

the fire on earth, the voices in heaven

The apparent contradiction among 'he bent the heavens and came down' (2 Samuel 22:10; Exodus 19:20) and 'from the heavens I spoke with you' (Exodus 20:19) is resolved: the one 'great fire' was on the earth while the rest of the voices were in the heavens (Deuteronomy 4:36). The revelation spans the grades, above and below, at once.

an image, but not all an image

'You saw no temunah (image), only a voice' (Deuteronomy 4:12) is qualified: an image was seen, but not the whole. The parable of the king in a white garment, seen in his garments, and heard, but never seen in his 'throat,' the source of the voice, figures a revelation that is manifest yet never total: the grades are shown, the hidden source is not.

the seven voices and the single utterance

Reconciling ‘they saw the voices’ with ‘a voice of words you heard’: first the seven voices were seen, then the single speech (dibbur) heard from among them all. The ten [utterances of the Decalogue] were ‘all spoken in a single utterance’, seven utterances of the seven voices, plus three (named in ‘a voice of words… no image… only a voice’). The whole was gathered into one lest Israel imagine that helpers or angels aided him and his voice alone could not be so strong, the anti-two-powers point again (cf. §§ 22, 32). Sod: the ten utterances are the ten sefirot spoken as one; the seven voices the lower grades, the three the upper.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 49-50; the ten utterances and the glory of concealment

The ten utterances mapped onto the divine structure. Lest the Decalogue be taken as ten independent "kings," "Anokhi" includes all ten: seven voices and three "sayings," the three being Ḥokhmah and Binah (Proverbs 4:7; Job 32:8) and a hidden third, guarded by the elder's warning to the child not to expound "the hidden things" (§ 49). And Proverbs 25:2 read as two glories, to conceal a matter, and to search one out: with "a word spoken al ofnav" heard as "al afnav," on its facets (§ 50).

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Another interpretation: so that the world would not say, ‘since they are ten utterances (asarah ma’amarot), [they are] for ten kings, perhaps they cannot speak by the mouth of one,’ he wrote in it ‘Anokhi (I am)’ and included all ten. And what are the ten kings? Seven voices and three sayings (amarim). And what are the sayings? ‘And the LORD has affirmed you (he’emirkha) this day’ (Deuteronomy 26:18). And what are the three? As it is written (Proverbs 4:7), ‘the beginning of wisdom: acquire wisdom, and with all your acquiring acquire understanding’; as it is said (Job 32:8), ‘and the breath of Shaddai gives them understanding (tevinem)’, the breath (neshamah) of Shaddai, it gives them understanding. What is the third? As that elder said to that child: ‘into what is beyond you (mufla mimkha) do not expound, and into what is concealed from you (mekhuseh mimkha) do not inquire; in what you have been permitted, contemplate: you have no business with the hidden things (nistarot).’

ד”א שלא יאמרו העולם הואיל והם עשרה מאמרות לעשרה מלכים. שמא לא יוכלו לדבר ע”פ אחד כתב ביה אנכי וכלל כל העשרה, ומאי עשרה מלכים שבע קולות ושלשה אמרים, ומאי אמרים וה’ האמירך היום (דברים כ”ו יח), ומאי נינהו שלשה דכתיב (משלי ד’ ז) ראשית חכמה קנה חכמה ובכל קנינך קנה בינה, כד”א (איוב ל”ב ח) ונשמת שדי תבינם, נשמתו של שדי היא תבינם, שלישי מאי היא כדאמר ליה ההוא סבא להההוא ינוקא במופלא ממך אל תדרוש ובמכוסה ממך אל תחקור, במה שהורשת התבונן אין לך עסק בנסתרות:

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תנא כבוד אלקים הסתר דבר (משלי כ"ה ב), מאי דבר, כדאמר (תהלים קי"ט קס) ראש דברך אמת, וכבוד מלכים חקור דבר (משלי שם), מאי דבר, דכתיב (שם כ"ה יא) דבר דבור על אופניו, אל תקרי אופניו אלא אפניו:

It was taught: 'the glory of God is to conceal a matter (kevod Elohim haster davar)' (Proverbs 25:2). What is 'davar' (a matter)? As it is said (Psalm 119:160), 'the head of your word is truth (rosh devarkha emet).' 'And the glory of kings is to search out a matter (ḥaqor davar)' (Proverbs, ibid.). What is 'davar'? As it is written (Proverbs 25:11), 'a word fitly spoken (davar davur al ofnav)': do not read 'ofnav (its occasions)' but 'afnav (its facets).'

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the ten as seven voices and three sayings

Another reading of why the ten utterances were gathered into one (continuing § 48): lest the world take ‘ten utterances (ma’amarot)’ as ten kings, independent powers unable to speak as one, ‘Anokhi (I am)’ includes all ten (the anti-two-powers point again, §§ 22, 32, 48). The ten = seven voices + three ‘sayings’ (amarim, drawn from Deuteronomy 26:18’s he’emirkha). The three are named from Proverbs 4:7 and Job 32:8: Ḥokhmah (wisdom), Binah (understanding, ‘the breath of Shaddai gives them understanding’), and a hidden third, given only by the elder’s warning to the child, ‘into what is beyond you do not expound… you have no business with the hidden things (nistarot).’ Sod: the ten sefirot are the seven lower grades (the voices) plus the three upper, Ḥokhmah, Binah, and the concealed Keter, the ‘hidden’ one must not investigate. The 7 + 3 structure of the tree.

the glory of concealment and the glory of searching

Proverbs 25:2 read as two glories: ‘the glory of God is to conceal a matter (davar)’ and ‘the glory of kings is to search out a matter.’ The ‘davar’ (word/matter) whose ‘head is truth’ (Psalm 119:160) both hides and invites search: ‘a word spoken al ofnav’

(fitly, ‘on its occasions’) is re-read ‘al afnav’ (‘on its facets, its aspects’), the word has many facets to be searched out. Sod: the tension of esoteric knowledge, the divine word is concealed (the hidden third of § 49, the nistarot) yet has facets the worthy may explore. Concealment and searching are two glories, not opposites, echoing the elder’s warning and its permission, ‘in what you have been permitted, contemplate.‘

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 51-53; the divided waters, silver and gold

The great right/left of the divine. The waters of creation divided, and Torah learned through them by acts of loving-kindness (§ 51); Haggai's "silver and gold" read as a king's two treasuries, the silver on the right, gentle and cleaving to the poor, and the gold on the left that shatters the enemy: Ḥesed and Gevurah, mercy and judgment (§ 52); and the letters of "gold" (zahav) unfolded into the male, the soul with its five names, and their foundation (§ 53).

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שאלו תלמידיו את ר' ברכיה
נרצה דברינו לפניך, לא נתן להם
רשות, פעם אחת נתן להם רשות,
והיא דעביד לבודקן אי אינון
השתא כוונו נפשייהו, יום אחד
בדק אותם אמר להם השמיעוני
חכמתכם, פתחו ואמרו בראשית
אחד ורוח מלפני יעטוף ונשמות
אני עשיתי (ישעי' נ"ז טז) פלג
אלהים מלא מים (תהלים ס"ה י)
מאי פלג, כך למדתנו ראינו שנטל
מימי בראשית וחלקן ונתן חצים
ברקיע וחצים בים אוקינוס הה"ד
פלג אלהים מלא מים ועל ידם
אדם לומד תורה דאמר ר' חמא
בזכות גמילות חסדים אדם לומד
תורה כדכתיב (ישעי' נ"ה א) הוי
כי צמא לכו למים ואשר אין לו
כסף לכו שברו ואכלו, לכו אליו
ויגמול לכם חסד ושברו ואכלו:

The students asked Rabbi Berakhiah: we wish [to lay] our words before you. He did not give them permission. Once he gave them permission, and that was in order to test them, whether they had now directed their souls [rightly]. One day he tested them; he said to them: let me hear your wisdom. They opened and said: 'In the beginning (Bereshit)' [is] one; 'and a spirit from before Me enwraps, and the souls I have made' (Isaiah 57:16); 'the stream of God is full of water' (Psalm 65:10). What is 'stream (peleg)'? Thus you taught us: we have seen that He took the waters of creation and divided them, and set half in the firmament and half in the ocean sea. This is what is written, 'the stream of God is full of water.' And through them a person learns Torah; for Rabbi Chama said: by the merit of acts of loving-kindness (gemilut chasadim) a person learns Torah, as it is written (Isaiah 55:1), 'ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat', come to Him, and He will do you kindness, and buy and eat.

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ד"א ואשר אין לו כסף לכו אליו כי יש אצלו כסף דכתיב (חגי ב' ח) לי הכסף ולי הזהב, מאי לי הכסף ולי הזהב, משל למה"ד למלך שיש לו שני אוצרות אחד של כסף ואחד של זהב, שם של כסף בימינו ושל זהב בשמאלו, אמר זה יהיה מזומן וקל להוציאו, ועושה דבריו בנחת והוא יהיה דבוק עם העניים ומנהיגם בנחת הה"ד (שמות ט"ו ו) ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח, ואם שמח בחלקו טוב, ואם לאו ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב, מאי ימינך ה' תרעץ אויב, א"ל זה הזהב דכתיב לי הכסף ולי הזהב:

Another interpretation: 'and he who has no money (kesef), come to Him,' for there is money with Him, as it is written (Haggai 2:8), 'mine is the silver and mine is the gold.' What is 'mine is the silver and mine is the gold'? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who has two treasuries, one of silver and one of gold; he set the silver on his right and the gold on his left. He said: this [silver] shall be ready and easy to bring forth, and it does its work gently, and it shall cleave to the poor and lead them gently. This is what is written (Exodus 15:6), 'your right hand, O LORD, is glorious in power.' And if [a man] rejoices in his portion, [it is] good; and if not, 'your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.' What is 'your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy'? He said to him: this is the gold, as it is written, 'mine is the silver and mine is the gold.'

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ולמה נקרא שמו זהב, שבו כלולות שלש מדות, זכר, והוא זי"ן, הנשמה, והיא הה"א, וחמשה שמות לנשמה רוח חיה יחידה נפש נשמה, מאי עבידתיה בה"א. והוא כסא לזיי"ן דכתיב (קהלת ה' ז) כי גבוה מעל גבוה שומר, ובי"ת היא קיומם כדאמר בראשית ברא:

And why is its name called 'gold (zahav)'? Because in it are included three attributes: the male, which is the zayin (ז); the soul, which is the heh (ה), and there are five names for the soul: ruach, chayah, yechidah, nefesh, neshamah; what is its function with the heh? It is a throne for the zayin, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 5:7), 'for one higher than the high watches'; and the bet (ב) is their sustaining, as it is said, 'In the beginning [He] created (Bereshit bara).'

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the divided waters; Torah through loving-kindness

Rabbi Berakhiah tests whether his students have 'directed their souls' before letting them expound. Their teaching: the waters of creation are divided, half in the firmament and half in the ocean sea (Psalm 65:10's 'peleg,' the stream or channel of God); and Torah is learned 'through them', through the waters, because, as Rabbi Chama held, acts of loving-kindness (gemilut chasadim) open the way to Torah (Isaiah 55:1, 'come to the waters'). Sod: the waters are the flow (shefa), and Chesed, loving-kindness, is the gate through which the flow, and Torah, reaches a person.

silver and gold: Chesed and Gevurah, right and left

Haggai 2:8 ('mine is the silver and mine is the gold') is read as a king's two treasuries. The silver on the right, 'ready and easy to bring forth,' gentle, cleaving to the poor and leading them ('your right hand, O LORD, is glorious in power,' Exodus 15:6a), is Chesed, loving-kindness. The gold on the left, 'your right hand shatters the enemy' (15:6b), is Gevurah, severe judgment. Sod: the two arms of the divine, the right/left polarity the Bahir has already figured as Michael and Gabriel (§§

11-12) and the open north (§§ 34-35): the mercy that gives and the might that restrains and shatters.

the letters of 'gold' and the five names of the soul

The name zahav (זהב, 'gold') is unfolded into its three letters as three 'attributes': zayin (ז), the male; heh (ה), the soul; and bet (ב), their foundation ('Bereshit bara'). The heh, the soul, is 'a throne for the zayin', the male grade rests upon it. Attached to the soul are its five names, nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah, yechidah: the fivefold soul of the later Kabbalah, ascending from the lowest (nefesh) to the highest (yechidah). Sod: gold (Gevurah) is read here as the meeting of the male grade and the soul upon the foundation, the letters themselves carrying the union.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 54; the king's daughter

One of the most consequential passages in all of Kabbalah, and the earliest clear figure of the Shekhinah as a bride. A king marries his daughter to a prince, and adorns her; but he can neither dwell outside his house nor sit with her without cease, so he sets “a window between him and her,” and through it father and daughter join together whenever either has need. Her clothing “of gold brocade” (Psalm 45:14) binds her to the gold of §§ 51-53: the Shekhinah adorned in the gold of Gevurah.

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ומאי עבידתיה הכא, משל למה"ד למלך שהיתה לו בת טובה ונעימה ונאה ושלימה, והשיאה לבן מלך, והלבישה ועטרה וקשטה ונתנה לו בממון רב, אפשר לו למלך לישב חוץ מביתו, אמרת לא, אפשר לו לשבת כל היום תמיד עמה, אמרת לא, הא כיצד, שם חלון בינו לבינה וכל שעה שצריכה הבת לאביה או האב לבתו מתחברים יחד דרך החלון הה"ד (תהלים מ"ה יח) כל כבודה בת מלך פנימה ממשבצות זהב לבושה:

And what is its function here? A parable, to what is it comparable? To a king who had a daughter, good and pleasant and comely and perfect (shleimah), and he married her to a prince (a king's son), and clothed her and crowned her and adorned her and gave her [in marriage] with great wealth. Can the king [then] sit outside his house? You said: no. Can he sit with her all day, continually? You said: no. How then? He set a window (chalon) between him and her; and whenever the daughter needs her father, or the father his daughter, they join together through the window. This is what is written (Psalm 45:18 in the source; the verse is at 45:14), 'all glorious is the king's daughter within; her clothing is of gold brocade (mishbetzot zahav).'

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the king's daughter: the Shekhinah

One of the earliest and most influential figures of the Shekhinah in the Kabbalah: the divine feminine imagined as a king's daughter, 'good and pleasant and comely and perfect', married out and yet never cut off from her father. Continuing § 53 (the heh, the soul, within 'gold'), the daughter is the heh-grade, the indwelling presence: in the developed system Malkhut, the tenth sefirah, the Shekhinah and divine bride. Her clothing 'of gold brocade' (Psalm 45:14) binds her to the gold (zahav) of §§ 52-53, the Shekhinah adorned with the gold of Gevurah, the judgment that is her outer garment. Gershom Scholem read this parable as a decisive early stage in the emergence of the Shekhinah as an independent feminine potency within the godhead. *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

the window: the channel between Father and Daughter

The heart of the image. The king can neither dwell outside his house nor sit with his daughter without cease; so he sets a

‘window (chalon) between him and her,’ and through it father and daughter ‘join together’ whenever either has need. Sod: the window is the channel of the flow, of a piece with the gimel-channel that pours grace in §§ 17-20 and the spring that must be dug before the tree can stand in § 23: the standing conduit between the transcendent Father (the higher grades) and the immanent Shekhinah, so that the union above and the presence below are never severed. Much of the theurgic life is the labor of keeping that window open.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 55-56; the bet, the future house, and gold as judgment

Back to the bet, and the last word on "gold." Proverbs 24:3 read in the future tense, "with wisdom a house *will* be built", so the house is one the Holy One rebuilds in the time to come, and the Torah that opens with a bet preceded the world; a dispute between two thousand years and seven is left standing (§ 55). And the gold of §§ 51-54: "from it goes out judgment," gold as Gevurah, with a warning against tipping the balance right or left (§ 56).

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ומה היא בי"ת דכתיב בסופה (משלי כ"ד ג) בחכמה יבנה בית, נבנה לא נאמר אלא יבנה, עתיד הקב"ה לבנותה ולקשטה אלפים באחד על אשר היתה, כדאמרינן מה הוה דתחילת התורה בבי"ת דכתיב (משלי ח' ל') ואהיה אצלו אמון ואהיה שעשועים יום יום תרי אלפין שנין, שהיא ראשית, תרי והכתוב אומר שבע דכתיב (ישעי' ל' כו) והיה אור הלבנה כאור החמה ואור החמה יהיה שבעתים, דאמרינן מה חמה לשבעה אף לבנה לשבעה, אנא אלפים אמרו:

And what is the bet? As it is written of it (Proverbs 24:3), 'with wisdom a house is built (yibaneh).' 'Was built (nivneh)' is not said, but 'will be built (yibaneh)': the Holy One will, in time to come, build it and adorn it two-thousandfold over what it was, as we have said. What is [the reason] that the beginning of the Torah is with a bet? As it is written (Proverbs 8:30), 'and I was beside Him as a nursling (amon), and I was [His] delight day by day', two thousand years; for it is 'the beginning (reshit),' two [thousand]. And Scripture says seven, as it is written (Isaiah 30:26), 'and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold', for we say, as the sun is [multiplied] to seven, so the moon to seven. I said two thousand; they said [seven].

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א"ל עד כאן חמשה מכאן ואילך מאי, א"ל אני אפרש תחלה זהב, מאי זהב, מלמד שממנו יוצא הדין,

He said to him: up to here [is] five; from here on, what? He said: I will first explain 'gold (zahav).' What is 'gold'? It teaches that from it goes

ואם תטה דבריך ימין ושמאל נזהר ממך׃	out judgment (din); and if you incline your words to the right or to the left, be warned of it.

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An orientation

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the bet, the future house, and the Torah's precedence

Proverbs 24:3 ('with wisdom a house is built') is read in the future tense: not nivneh ('was built') but yibaneh ('will be built'), the Holy One will build and adorn the 'house' two-thousandfold in the time to come. And the Torah, which begins with a bet (Bereshit), preceded the world; Proverbs 8:30 (Wisdom 'beside Him as amon, His delight day by day') is taken for the two thousand years of the Torah's precedence, since 'reshit', the bet, whose value is two, marks the count. Sod: the 'house' built by Ḥokhmah is the world, or the Shekhinah below,

destined to be rebuilt in the messianic future. A dispute is then registered, two thousand (years) against seven (the sevenfold light of Isaiah 30:26, the seven days), and left standing; the numerology here is dense and its arithmetic not fully transparent.

gold as judgment (din)

Returning to the gold (zahav) of §§ 52-55: 'from it goes out judgment (din).' Gold is Gevurah, the severe grade, the wellspring of strict judgment; and the warning, 'if you incline your words to the right or to the left, be warned': guards against tipping the balance of mercy (the right, Ḥesed) and judgment (the left, Gevurah). Cf. the silver and gold of § 52.

Editorial decisions

- **the 2000 vs 7 numerology.** Rendered the numbers literally and flagged the two-thousand-against-seven dispute as a dense crux in the apparatus; did not force a resolution of the arithmetic.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 57-60; the seven days, the souls, and heaven

The seven, the souls, and the making of heaven. Isaiah's "light of the seven days" as the six vessels of creation plus the Sabbath, which "sustains all the souls" (§ 57); from there the souls fly forth, and the covenant is cut with Abraham (§ 58); heaven (shamayim) as fire and water kneaded together, the peace between them, Tiferet holding Ḥesed and Gevurah, sealed with a prayer for peace and love (§ 59); and the seven righteous judgments of Psalm 119, left for the reader to find (§ 60).

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מאי דכתיב (ישעי' שם) והיה אור הלבנה כאור החמה ואור החמה יהיה שבעתים כאור שבעת הימים, הימים ימים מיבעי ליה, אלא אותן ימים שכתוב בהן (שמות ל"א יז) כי ששת ימים עשה ה' וגו', אמר לו חברו וכן קבלתי מדכתיב כי ששת ימים עשה ה', כמה דאת אמר ששה כלים נאים עשה הקב"ה, ומאי הם את השמים ואת הארץ, והא ז' הן וכן כתוב (שם) וביום השביעי שבת וינפש, מאי וינפש, מלמד שיום השבת מקיים כל הנפשות שנאמר וינפש:

What is written (Isaiah 30:26), 'and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of the seven days'? 'The days', it should have said 'days'; rather, those days of which it is written (Exodus 31:17), 'for [in] six days the LORD made [the heavens and the earth].' His fellow said to him: and so I have received, from what is written, 'for six days the LORD made', as you say, six fine vessels the Holy One made. And what are they? 'the heavens and the earth.' But behold, they are seven! And so it is written (ibid.), 'and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (va-yinafash).' What is 'va-yinafash'? It teaches that the Sabbath day sustains all the souls (nefashot), as it is said, 'and He was refreshed (va-yinafash).'

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ד"א מלמד שמשם פורחין הנשמות שנאמר וינפש, עד אלף דור שנאמר. (תהלים ק"ה ח) דבר

Another interpretation: it teaches that from there the souls fly forth, as it is said, 'and He was refreshed

צוה לאלף דור, וסמיך ליה (שם ט) אשר כרת את אברהם, ומאי אשר כרת, כרת ליה ברית, בין עשר אצבעותיו ידיו ועשר אצבעות רגליו, נתבייש אברהם א"ל הקב"ה אני הנה בריתי אתך ובו תהיה לאב המון גוים:

(va-yinafash)', until a thousand generations, as it is said (Psalm 105:8), 'the word He commanded to a thousand generations,' and adjacent to it (ibid. 9), 'which He made with Abraham.' And what is 'which He made (asher karat)'? He cut a covenant (brit) with him, between the ten fingers of his hands and the ten fingers of his feet. Abraham was ashamed. The Holy One said to him: I: behold, My covenant is with you (Genesis 17:4), and through it you shall be father of a multitude of nations.

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ומאי שמים, מלמד שגיבל הקב"ה אש ומים וטפחן זה בזה ועשה מהן ראש לדבריו דכתיב (תהלים קי"ט קס) ראש דברך אמת, והיינו דכתיב שמים, שם מים, אש ומים, א"ל עד כאן עושה שלום במרומיו נתן ביניהם שלום ואהבה יתן בינינו שלום ואהבה:

And what is 'heaven (shamayim)'? It teaches that the Holy One kneaded fire (esh) and water (mayim) and beat them one into the other, and made from them the head of His word, as it is written (Psalm 119:160), 'the head of Your word is truth.' And this is [the meaning of] 'shamayim': 'sham mayim (there is water),' [that is] 'esh u-mayim (fire and water).' He said to him: up to here [is] 'He makes peace in His heights': He set peace and love between them; may He set between us peace and love.

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ועוד אמרינן (תהלים קי"ט קמ"ד) שבע ביום הללתיך על משפטי צדקיך, אמרו לו מה הם, אמר להם לא דקדקתם בדברי, צאו ודקדקו בהם ותמצאם:

And further we say (Psalm 119:144 in the source; the verse is at 119:164), 'seven times a day I praise You for Your righteous judgments (mishpetei tzidkekha).' They said to him: what are they? He said to them: you did not examine my words; go out and examine them, and you will find them.

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the seven days, the six vessels, and the souls

Isaiah 30:26's 'light of the seven days' (with the definite article) is read as the days of Genesis (Exodus 31:17, 'six days the LORD made'): the Holy One made 'six fine vessels', 'the heavens and the earth', and, since that makes seven with the seventh day, 'and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (va-yinafash).' The Sabbath 'sustains all the souls (nefashot).' Sod: the six vessels are the six directions, the six lower grades of construction (Ḥesed through Yesod); the seventh, the Sabbath, is the receiving grade (Malkhut) that gathers and sustains the souls.

the flight of the souls and the covenant with Abraham

'Va-yinafash' re-read: from there the souls fly forth, 'to a thousand generations' (Psalm 105:8), a verse the Bahir joins to its neighbor, 'which He made (karat) with Abraham' (105:9). 'Which He cut' is the covenant (brit) with Abraham, 'between the ten fingers of his hands and the ten of his feet', an allusion to circumcision and to the ten grades; Genesis 17:4, 'My covenant is with you, father of a multitude.' Sod: the source of the souls; the covenant of circumcision as the sign at the foundation (Yesod), and the ten fingers as the ten sefirot.

heaven as fire and water; the peace between them

The name shamayim (שמים, ‘heaven’) is unfolded: the Holy One kneaded fire (esh) and water (mayim) and beat them together into ‘the head of His word’ (Psalm 119:160), so ‘shamayim’ is heard as ‘sham mayim’ (there is water) and as ‘esh u-mayim’ (fire and water). The making of peace between fire and water is the reconciling center, Tiferet, holding Ḥesed (water) and Gevurah (fire): the same peace figured by Michael and Gabriel (§§ 11-12) and by the voice that ‘hews flames of fire’ (§ 45). The passage closes on a prayer, ‘may He set between us peace and love.‘

the seven praises

Psalm 119:164 (‘seven times a day I praise You for Your righteous judgments’) is left as a challenge: the seven are not named, ‘you did not examine my words; go and examine them, and you will find them.’ The seven are the recurring seven of the Bahir: the seven voices, the seven lower grades, the seven days.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 61-63; the tzadi, the field, and the thirty-two paths

From the letters to the divine feminine. The tzadi read as the tzaddik, “the foundation of the world”, Yesod (§ 61); the “field” of Song of Songs heard as “the song,” the heart’s longing to range rather than rest (§ 62); and the heart of it: the heart (lev) is thirty-two, the thirty-two paths of wisdom, gathered by the Holy One into the daughter and her garment: the Shekhinah, called sister, daughter, and mother, with a warning that this inquiry undid Ben Zoma (§ 63).

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שאלו אותו מאי צד"י, אמר להם זה נו"ן יו"ד צד"י אף זוגו נו"ן יו"ד הה"ד (משלי י' כה) וצדיק יסוד עולם:

They asked him: what is the tzadi (צ)? He said to them: it is a nun (נ), a yod (י), [and] a tzadi; and its pair too is a nun, a yod. This is what is written (Proverbs 10:25), 'and the righteous is the foundation of the world (tzaddik yesod olam).'

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שאלו אותו מאי דכתיב (במדבר כ"ג יד) ויקחהו שדה צופים, מאי שדה צופים, דכתיב (שה"ש ז' יב) לכה דודי נצא השדה, מאי השדה, אל תקרי השדה אלא השירה, ומאי השירה, א"ל לבו להקב"ה לכה דודי נצא השדה לטייל ואל אשב תמיד במקום אחד:

They asked him: what is written (Numbers 23:14), 'and he took him to the field of watchers (sdeh tzofim)'? What is 'the field of watchers'? As it is written (Song of Songs 7:12), 'come, my beloved, let us go out to the field.' What is 'the field'? Do not read 'the field (ha-sadeh)' but 'the song (ha-shirah).' And what is 'the song'? His heart said to the Holy One: 'come, my beloved, let us go out to the field': to stroll, and let me not sit always in one place.

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ומאי לבו, א"ל א"כ בן זומא מבחוץ ואתה עמו, לב הוא שלשים ושתים והיו סתומים ובהם נברא העולם, מאי ל"ב, א"ל ל"ב נתיבות, משל למלך שהיה בחדרי חדרים ומנין החדרים ל"ב, ולכל חדר יש לו נתיב, נאה למלך זה להכנס הכל בחדרו על דרך נתיבתיו, אמרת לא, נאה לו לגלות פניניו ומשבצותיו ומצפוניו וגנזיו וחמודותיו, אמרת לא, מה עשה נגע בבת וכלל בה כל הנתיבות ובמלבושה, והרוצה להכנס בפנים יסתכל הנה, ונשאה למלך גם נתנה לו במתנה, לפעמים קורא אותה באהבתו בה אחותי כי ממקום אחד היו, ולפעמים קורא אותה בתו כי בתו היא, ולפעמים קורא אותה אמי:

And what is 'his heart (libo)'? He said to him: if so, Ben Zoma is outside, and you are with him. The heart (lev) is thirty-two, and they were closed, and by them the world was created. What is 'lev [thirty-two]'? He said to him: thirty-two paths (netivot). A parable: to a king who was in the innermost chambers, and the number of the chambers was thirty-two, and to each chamber there was a path. Is it becoming for this king that everyone should enter his chamber by way of his paths? You said: no. Is it becoming for him to reveal his pearls and his settings and his hidden things and his treasures and his precious things? You said: no. What did he do? He touched the daughter (bat) and included in her all the paths, and [set them] in her garment; and whoever wishes to enter within, let him look here. And he married the daughter to a king, and also gave her to him as a gift. Sometimes, in his love for her, he calls her 'my sister,' for they were from one place; and sometimes he calls her 'my daughter,' for she is his daughter; and sometimes he calls her 'my mother.'

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the tzadi and the tzaddik (Yesod)

The letter tzadi (צ) is analyzed as a nun (נ) bent together with a yod (י), and 'its pair', the final tzadi (ץ), likewise a nun and a yod: the letter is read to encode the tzaddik, 'the foundation of the world' (Proverbs 10:25). In the developed system this is Yesod, the ninth sefirah, the righteous foundation and the channel through which the flow passes to the world; the bent nun and the yod (figured as female and male) mark the union that grade effects.

the field and the song

Numbers 23:14's 'field of watchers' is led through Song of Songs 7:12 ('come, my beloved, let us go out to the field') to an al-tikri reading: not ha-sadeh ('the field') but ha-shirah ('the song'). The heart's longing to 'go out and stroll' rather than 'sit always in one place' is the desire to range through the grades and their song, not to rest in a single station.

the thirty-two paths and the daughter

The heart (lev, לב) has the numerical value 32, the 'thirty-two paths of wisdom' by which, in the Sefer Yetzirah (1:1), the world was created (here 'closed,' concealed). The parable: a king in thirty-two innermost chambers, each reached by its own path, can neither let all enter by all the paths nor reveal all his treasures; so he 'touches the daughter' and gathers every one of the thirty-two paths into her and into her garment, and whoever would enter looks to her. The daughter is the Shekhinah (as in § 54), who contains and conveys the paths, married to a king (the divine groom) and given as a gift. Her threefold naming, sister, daughter, mother marks the Shekhinah's shifting relation to the grades: sister to the groom ('from one place,' Tiferet), daughter to the supernal Father (Ḥokhmah), and mother to the world below. The warning 'Ben Zoma is outside' invokes the tanna who 'gazed and was stricken' in the Pardes (b. Chagigah 14b): this inquiry is perilous.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 64-67; wisdom and judgment, and the return

Wisdom, judgment, and the way back. There is no judgment without wisdom, Solomon was given wisdom, then judged justly (§ 64); Solomon bears the divine name, so God gives him the daughter as a gift, the wisdom that does justice and, failing that, chastises (§ 65); and "I too": Knesset Yisrael, the Shekhinah, also chastises, not only the advocate of mercy but the master of judgment (§ 66); yet the seven who chastise can be brought back through return: "return, and I will return with you" (§ 67).

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ועוד כי אין דין אם אין חכמה, שהרי נאמר (מ"א ה' כו) וה' נתן חכמה לשלמה, ואחרי כך דן את הדין על מתכונתו שנאמר (שם ג' כח) וישמעו כל ישראל את המשפט אשר שפט המלך ויראו מפני המלך כי ראו כי חכמת אלהים בקרבו לעשות משפט. לא:

And further: there is no judgment (din) without wisdom (chokhmah), for it is said (1 Kings 5:26), 'and the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon,' and afterward he judged the judgment according to its measure, as it is said (ibid. 3:28), 'and all Israel heard the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared before the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was within him to do justice.' No.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומה חכמה נתן הקב"ה לשלמה, שלמה נושא שמו של הקב"ה כדאמרינן כל שלמה האמור בשה"ש קודש לבד מאחד, אמר הקב"ה הואיל ושמך כשם כבודי אשיא לך בתי, והא נשואה היא, אימא במתנה נתונה לו, דכתיב (מ"א ה' כו) וה' נתן חכמה לשלמה, ולא פירש, והיכן פירש, להלן שנאמר (שם ג' כח) כי ראו חכמת אלהים בקרבו. לעשות

And what wisdom did the Holy One give to Solomon? Solomon bears the name of the Holy One, as we said: every 'Solomon (Shlomo)' said in the Song of Songs is holy, except for one. The Holy One said: since your name is like the name of My glory, I will marry you My daughter. But behold, she is [already] married! Say: she was given to him as a gift, as it is written (1 Kings 5:26), 'and the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon',

משפט, הוי אומר אותה חכמה שנתנה לו אלהים ושהיא עמו בחדרו היא בקרבו לעשות משפט, מאי לעשות משפט, אלא כל זמן שאדם עושה משפט חכמת אלהים בקרבו, זאת עוזרתו ומקרבתו, ואם לאו מרחקתו, ולא עוד אלא מייסרתו דכתיב (ויקרא כ"ו כח) ויסרתי אתכם אף אני:

and it did not explain [what]. And where did it explain? Further on, as it is said (ibid. 3:28), 'for they saw the wisdom of God within him to do justice.' That wisdom which God gave him, and which is with him in his chamber, is within him to do justice. What is 'to do justice'? Rather, whenever a person does justice, the wisdom of God is within him; this [wisdom] helps him and draws him near; and if not, it distances him, and moreover it chastises him, as it is written (Leviticus 26:28), 'and I will chastise you, I too (af ani).'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ואמר ר' רחומאי מאי דכתיב (שם) אף אני, אלא הקב"ה אמר ויסרתי אתכם, וכנסת ישראל אומרת אל תדמו שאני מבקשת רחמים עליכם אלא אף אני איסר אתכם, לא די שאני אדון הדין אלא אף אני איסר אתכם:

And Rabbi Rechumai said: what is written (ibid.), 'I too (af ani)'? Rather, the Holy One said, 'and I will chastise you'; and the Assembly of Israel (Knesset Yisrael) says: do not imagine that I seek mercy for you; rather, I too will chastise you. Not [only] that I am the master of judgment (din), but I too will chastise you.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

מאי שבע על חטאתיכם, אלא אמרה כנסת ישראל ויסרתי אתכם אף אני ואותם שנאמר בהם (תהלים קי"ט קסד) שבע ביום הללתיך, נתלוו אליה וענו ואמרו אף אנו שבע, אע"פ שבנו מי שמתהפך, מי שממונה על הזכות ועל הטובה, אף אנו נתהפך ונייסר, למה, מפני חטאתיכם, ואם תשובו אלי ואשובה אליכם דכתיב (מלאכי ג' ז) שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם. ואשיב לא נאמר אלא ואשיבה אליכם, עמכם ונבקש כלנו רחמים מן המלך, ומה

What is 'seven for your sins (sheva al chatoteichem)'? Rather, the Assembly of Israel said: 'and I will chastise you, I too'; and those of whom it is said (Psalm 119:164), 'seven times a day I praise You,' joined themselves to her and answered and said: we too [will be] seven. Even though among us is one who reverses, one appointed over merit and over good, we too will reverse and chastise. Why? Because of your sins. 'And if you return to Me, I will return to you,' as it is written (Malachi 3:7), 'return to Me, and I will return to

אומר המלך (ירמי' ג' כב) שובו בנים שובבים ארפא משובותיכם, (יחזקאל י"ח ל) שובו והשיבו, מאי שובו והשיבו, אלא שובו ובקשו לאותן שבע שישובו עמכם הה"ד והשיבו, אותם שאמרו שבע על חטאתיכם:

you.' 'And I will return (ve-ashiv)' is not said, but 'and I will return to you (ve-ashivah aleikhem)', [I will return] with you; and let us all seek mercy from the King. And what does the King say (Jeremiah 3:22), 'return, O backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings'; (Ezekiel 18:30), 'return and turn back (shuvu ve-hashivu).' What is 'return and turn back'? Rather: return, and ask those seven that they return with you. This is what is written, 'and turn back', those who said 'seven for your sins.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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no judgment without wisdom

Judgment (din) requires wisdom (chokhmah): Solomon was given ‘wisdom’ (1 Kings 5:26) and only then ‘did justice’ (1

Kings 3:28). Sod: the grade of judgment, Gevurah, din, depends on and is guided by the grade of wisdom, Ḥokhmah; severity uninformed by wisdom is blind, so the two grades must work together.

Solomon, the daughter, and the wisdom that judges

Solomon 'bears the name of the Holy One', the Song of Songs' 'Shlomo' is read as a name of God, save one, so God gives him 'My daughter': already married (to a king, §§ 54, 63), she is 'given as a gift.' The wisdom in his chamber is 'within him to do justice.' Sod: Ḥokhmah is given to the king who bears the divine name; the Shekhinah, the daughter, is the wisdom-that-judges, drawing near the just and, when a person does not do justice, distancing and chastising him (Leviticus 26:28).

Knesset Yisrael also chastises

'af ani' ('I too,' Leviticus 26:28) is read so that not only does the Holy One chastise, but the Assembly of Israel (Knesset Yisrael), a standard name of the Shekhinah / Malkhut, also chastises: 'do not imagine I seek [only] mercy for you; I too will chastise you.' Sod: the Shekhinah's severe face, the daughter as din, the same stern aspect as the 'tzedek that terrifies the righteous' (§ 75); she is not only the intercessor for mercy but herself 'the master of judgment.'

the seven, and the way back through return

The ‘seven’ of Psalm 119:164 (the seven lower grades, the seven praises) join Knesset Yisrael and ‘also’ chastise, even the grade ‘appointed over merit and good’ (the usual advocate, Ḥesed/Yesod) reverses. But the way back is teshuvah: ‘return to Me, and I will return to you’ (Malachi 3:7), read as ‘I will return WITH you’; and ‘return and turn back’ (Ezekiel 18:30) means return, and bring the seven back with you. Sod: repentance restores the grades to mercy, drawing the severe seven back into balance, the return below that reunites the grades above.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 68-70; the chariot, prayer, and the alef

Contemplation, and the threshold of the Infinite. Prayer read as gazing on the work of the chariot, to be "ravished" in the love of wisdom (§ 68); the "hearing" that comes before understanding (§ 69); and the heart of it: the ear is the shape of the alef, the head of all the letters, and as uttering the alef opens the mouth, so thought opens toward Ein Sof, "without end and without limit." The divine Name is sanctified "in the palace of holiness", which is thought itself, the alef (§ 70).

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שאלו תלמידיו את ר' רחומאי מאי דכתיב (חבקוק ג, א) תפלה לחבקוק הנביא על שגיונות, תפלה, תהלה מיבעי ליה, אלא כל המפנה לבו מעסקי עולם ומסתכל במעשה מרכבה מקובל לפני הקב"ה כאלו מתפלל כל היום שנאמר תפלה, מאי שגיונות, כדכתיב (משלי ה' יט) באהבתה תשגה תמיד ' ומאי ניהו. מעשה מרכבה דכתיב (חבקוק ג' ב) ה' שמעתי שמעך יראתי:

The students of Rabbi Rechumai asked him: what is written (Habakkuk 3:1), 'a prayer (tefillah) of Habakkuk the prophet, concerning errancies (shigyonot)'? 'Prayer (tefillah)': it should have said 'praise (tehillah).' Rather, whoever turns his heart away from the affairs of the world and gazes upon the work of the chariot (ma'aseh merkavah) is accepted before the Holy One as though he prayed the whole day, as it is said, 'a prayer.' What is 'errancies (shigyonot)'? As it is written (Proverbs 5:19), 'in her love you shall be ravished (tishgeh) always.' And what is it? The work of the chariot, as it is written (Habakkuk 3:2), 'O LORD, I heard Your report (shim'akha), I feared.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ד"א מאי דכתיב (שם) ה' שמעתי שמעך יראתי וגו' מ"ט כשאמר שמעך אמר יראתי וכשאמר בקרב שנים לא אמר יראתי אלא משמעך יראתי, ומאי משמעך, מקום ששומעים בו, ומ"ט אמר

Another interpretation: what is written (ibid.), 'O LORD, I heard Your report, I feared,' and so on? Why is it that when he said 'Your report (shim'akha)' he said 'I feared,' but when he said 'in the midst of the years' he did not say 'I

שמעתי הבנתי מבעי ליה, כד"א (דברים כ"ח מט) גוי אשר לא תשמע לשונו

feared,' but rather 'from Your report (mi-shim'akha) I feared'? And what is 'from Your report (mi-shim'akha)'? A place where they hear. And why did he say 'I heard (shamati)': 'I understood (hevanti)' it should have said? As it is said (Deuteronomy 28:49), 'a nation whose tongue you do not hear (lo tishma).'

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ומ"ט אמר י ר א ת י, משום דאוזן דמות א ל " ף ואלף ר א ש ל כ ל האותיות, ולא עוד אלא אל"ף גורמת לכל האותיות קיומם, ואל"ף דמות המוח, מה אל"ף כשאתה זוכרה אתה פותח פיך כך המחשבה כשאתה חושב לאין סוף ותכלית, ומהאל"ף יצאו כל האותיות, הלא תראה שהיא בתחילתן ואומר (מיכה ב' יג) וה' בראשם, דקיימא לן דכל שם הכתוב ביו"ד ה"א וי"ו ה"א מיוחד הקב"ה ומקודש בקודש, ומאי בקדש, בהיכל הקדש, ואנה היכל הקדש, הוי אומר במחשבה והיינו אל"ף הה"ד (חבקוק שם) ה' שמעתי שמעך יראתי:

And why did he say 'I feared (yareti)'? Because the ear (ozen) is the shape of an alef (א), and the alef is the head of all the letters. And moreover, the alef grants all the letters their endurance; and the alef is the shape of the brain (mo'ach). As with the alef, when you utter it you open your mouth, so [with] thought (machashavah): when you think toward the Infinite (Ein Sof) without end and without limit. And from the alef went out all the letters: do you not see that it is at their beginning? And it says (Micah 2:13), 'and the LORD at their head.' For we hold that every name written yod-heh-vav-heh is the unique Holy One, sanctified in holiness (ba-kodesh).

And what is ‘in holiness’? In the palace of holiness (heikhal ha-kodesh). And where is the palace of holiness? Say: in thought (machashavah), and this is the alef. This is what is written (Habakkuk, ibid.), ‘O LORD, I heard Your report, I feared.’

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prayer as gazing on the chariot

Habakkuk 3:1, ‘a prayer (tefillah) of Habakkuk,’ is read against the expected ‘praise (tehillah)’: whoever turns from the affairs of the world and gazes upon the work of the chariot (ma’aseh merkavah), the classical esoteric contemplation of the divine throne (Ezekiel 1), is counted ‘as though he prayed the whole

day.' And 'errancies (shigyonot)' is heard through Proverbs 5:19, 'in her love you shall be ravished (tishgeh) always': the ravishment of contemplation. Sod: the chariot-vision is itself the highest prayer, and the mystic is 'ravished' in the love of wisdom.

the place of hearing

Habakkuk 3:2, 'I heard Your report (shim'akha), I feared': the Bahir asks why fear attaches to 'Your report' and reads 'from Your report (mi-shim'akha)' as 'a place where they hear', a grade named by hearing. And 'I heard (shamati),' not 'I understood (hevanti),' marks a reception that precedes full comprehension (Deuteronomy 28:49, 'a nation whose tongue you do not hear'). Sod: the grade of hearing, understanding received rather than grasped, the receptive upper mother, Binah.

the alef, thought, and the Infinite

The ear (ozen) is the shape of an alef (א); the alef is 'the head of all the letters,' grants them their endurance, and is 'the shape of the brain (mo'ach).' As pronouncing the alef opens the mouth, so thought (machashavah) opens toward the Infinite, Ein Sof, 'without end and without limit'; from the alef all the letters go forth ('and the LORD at their head,' Micah 2:13). And the Name YHWH is sanctified 'in the palace of holiness (heikhal ha-

kodesh)', which is thought itself, the alef. Sod: the alef is the first stirring of emergence, the point of supernal thought (Ḥokhmah, and the reach beyond it toward Keter and Ein Sof); the divine Name is housed in that thought. This is among the Bahir's foundational statements of machashavah, thought, as the dwelling of the Name and the threshold of the Infinite.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 71-74; the hidden king, the pearl, and tzedek

Habakkuk's prayer, and the turn to judgment. The hidden king who forbids being sought, so the seeker fears (§ 71); the pearl, the delight of the kingdom, more precious than the angels, that gives birth to the years (§ 72); the "day" that is evening and morning, not the sun's (§ 73); and the skies that "pour down righteousness," tzedek read as the attribute of judgment: "judge yourself and live, or He will judge over you" (§ 74).

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וכן אמר חבקוק תפלתי ידעתי שנתקבלה בתענוג, גם אני התענגתי וכשהגעתי למקום פלוני והבנתי שמעך יראתי, על כן (חבקוק שם) הן פעלך בקרב שנים חייהו, ביחודך, משל למה"ד למלך אמון מופלא ומכוסה שנכנס לביתו וצוה בל יבקשו עליו, על כן המבקש יפחד פן ידע המלך שהוא עובר על מצותו, ולכך אמר יראתי, ה' פעלך בקרב שנים חייהו כך אמר חבקוק הואיל ושמך כך ובך שמך פעלך בקרב שנים חייהו, כן יהיה לעד:

And so Habakkuk said: I knew that my prayer was accepted with delight, and I too took delight; and when I reached a certain place and understood, 'I heard Your report, I feared.' Therefore (Habakkuk 3:2), 'Your work, in the midst of the years revive it', in Your unity. A parable: to what is it comparable? To a wondrous and hidden king (melekh amon) who entered his house and commanded that they not seek [after] him; therefore whoever seeks is afraid, lest the king know that he transgresses his command. And therefore he said 'I feared.' 'O LORD, Your work, in the midst of the years revive it', thus said Habakkuk: since Your name is thus, and in You is Your name, [may] 'Your work in the midst of the years revive it', so may it be forever.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ד"א פעלך בקרב שנים חייהו משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו מרגלית טובה והיא חמדת מלכותו

Another interpretation: 'Your work in the midst of the years revive it.' A parable: to what is it

ובעת שמחתו מחבקה ומנשקה ושמה על ראשו ואוהב אותה, אמר חבקוק אע"פ שהמלאכים. עמך, אותה המרגלית חמדה היא בעולמך, על כן בקרב שנים חייהו, מאי משמע לישנא דשנים, שנאמר (בראשית א' ג) ויאמר אלהים יהי אור, ואין אור אלא יום דכתיב (שם טו) את המאור הגדול לממשלת היום ואת המאור הקטן לממשלת הלילה, והשנים הם מימים הה"ד (חבקוק שם) בקרב שנים חייהו, בקרב אותה המרגלית המולידה את השנים:

comparable? To a king who had a good pearl (margalit), and it was the delight of his kingdom; and in the time of his joy he embraces it and kisses it and sets it upon his head and loves it. Habakkuk said: even though the angels are with You, that pearl is the delight in Your world; therefore, 'in the midst of the years revive it.' What is implied by the term 'years (shanim)'? As it is said (Genesis 1:3), 'and God said, let there be light'; and 'light' is nothing but day, as it is written (Genesis 1:15 in the source; the verse is at 1:16), 'the great luminary for the rule of the day, and the small luminary for the rule of the night'; and the years are of days. This is what is written (Habakkuk, ibid.), 'in the midst of the years revive it': in the midst of that pearl which gives birth to the years.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

והכתיב (ישעי' מ"נ ה) ממזרח אביא זרעך, והשמש זורחת במזרח, ואמרת שהמרגלית היא יום, אני לא אמרתי אלא (בראשית א' ה) ויהי ערב ויהי

But it is written (Isaiah 43:5; the source's chapter numeral here is corrupt), 'from the east I will bring your seed,' and the sun shines in the east, and you said that the pearl is day! I did not say [that], but

בקר יום, הה"ד (שם ב' ד) ביום עשות ה' אלהים ארץ ושמים:

(Genesis 1:5), 'and there was evening and there was morning, day.' This is what is written (ibid. 2:4), 'in the day the LORD God made earth and heaven.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

והכתיב (תהלים י"ח יב) ישת חשך סתרו סביבותיו סוכתו חשכת מים עבי שחקים, א"ל כתיב ביה (ישעי' מ"ה ח) ושחקים יזלו צדק, וצדק זה מדת הדין של עולם שנאמר (דברים טז כ) צדק צדק תרדוף וכתיב בתריה (שם) למען תחיה וירשת את הארץ, אם תדין עצמך תחיה, ואם לאו הוא ידין עליך ותתקיים בעל כרחך:

But it is written (Psalm 18:12), 'He makes darkness His hiding-place around Him, His pavilion the darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.' He said to him: it is written of it (Isaiah 45:8), 'and the skies shall pour down righteousness (tzedek),' and this tzedek is the attribute of judgment (midat ha-din) of the world, as it is said (Deuteronomy 16:20), 'justice, justice you shall pursue (tzedek tzedek tirdof),' and it is written after it (ibid.), 'so that you may live and inherit the land.' If you judge yourself, you shall live; and if not, He will judge over you, and you will be established against your will.

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the hidden king and the fear

Habakkuk's fear (§§ 68-70) is now explained: the Holy One is a 'wondrous and hidden king (melekh amon)' who, entering his house, forbids being sought after; so whoever seeks is afraid lest he transgress by the very seeking. The prayer 'Your work, in the midst of the years, revive it' is offered 'in Your unity.' Sod: the reverence and peril before the concealed Godhead, the seeking that is itself perilous (cf. 'Ben Zoma is outside,' § 63).

the pearl that gives birth to the years

'In the midst of the years revive it': the 'pearl (margalit)', the delight of the king's kingdom, which in his joy he embraces, kisses, and sets upon his head, is more precious than the angels; and the 'years (shanim)' are of 'days,' of light (Genesis 1). The pearl 'gives birth to the years.' Sod: the pearl is the Shekhinah,

the delight the King crowns Himself with, the source of the days and times below.

the pearl and the day

A clarification: the pearl is not ‘day’ in the sense of the sun rising in the east (Isaiah 43:5), but the ‘day’ of Genesis 1:5, ‘and there was evening and there was morning, day’, and of Genesis 2:4, the day that includes its own night. Sod: the Shekhinah as the day that contains evening and morning, the full measure rather than the daylit half.

tzedek, the attribute of judgment

Against ‘He makes darkness His hiding-place’ (Psalm 18:12), the answer: ‘the skies pour down righteousness (tzedek)’ (Isaiah 45:8), and ‘this tzedek is the attribute of judgment (midat ha-din) of the world’, ‘justice, justice you shall pursue’ (Deuteronomy 16:20), followed by ‘so that you may live.’ ‘If you judge yourself, you shall live; and if not, He will judge over you, and you will be established against your will.’ Sod: tzedek is the Shekhinah / Malkhut in her judging aspect, the same stern tzedek that in the next section ‘terrifies the righteous’ (§ 75), and self-judgment below forestalls the judgment from above.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 75; the two tzedeks and the tzedek that terrifies the righteous

The doubled “justice, justice (tzedek tzedek)” of Deuteronomy 16:20 read as two grades: the first identified with the Shekhinah, the second “the tzedek that terrifies the righteous”, the merciful and the severe faces of one presence. A prooftext chain then lifts tzedek above tzedakah (the head, truth, peace), closing on the measure given to David and his throne “like the sun.”

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And what is ‘justice, justice (tzedek tzedek)’ (Deuteronomy 16:20), [said] twice? He said to him: as it is written (Psalm 18:13), ‘from the brightness before Him.’ The first tzedek is tzedek proper, and she is the Shekhinah, as it is written (Isaiah 1:21), ‘tzedek lodges in her.’ And what is the second tzedek? This is the tzedek that terrifies the righteous. And is this tzedek ‘tzedakah’ (righteous giving) or not? No. And what is the reason? As it is written (Isaiah 59:17), ‘and he put on tzedakah as a breastplate’, while tzedek is ‘a helmet of salvation on his head’ (ibid.); and ‘his head’ is nothing but truth, as it is said (Psalm 119:160), ‘the head of Your word is truth’; and ‘truth’ is nothing but peace, as it is said (Isaiah 39:8), ‘for there shall be peace and truth in my days.’ Is it possible for a man to say such a thing? Rather, thus said Hezekiah: that measure which You gave to David my father is half my days, and peace and truth are half my days. Therefore he mentioned ‘my days’ and mentioned ‘peace and truth’; and ‘in my days’, for all is one. This is what is written, ‘peace’: (Genesis 1:5) ‘and there was evening and there was morning, one day’: just as the day is peace, so he too sought peace, as it is said (2 Kings 20:19), ‘peace and truth shall be in my days,’ by

ומאי צדק צדק (דברים שם) תרי זימני, א"ל דכתיב (תהלים י"ח יג) מנגה נגדו, צדק ראשין צדק ממש והיא שכינה כדכתיב (ישעי' א' כא) צדק ילין בה, ומאי צדק שני, זה צדק שמפחיד את הצדיקים, והאי צדק הוי צדקה או לא, לאו, ומאי טעם, כדכתיב (שם נ"ט יז) וילבש צדקה כשריון, וצדק הוי כובע ישועה בראשו (שם) ואין ראשו אלא אמת שנאמר (תהלים קי"ט קס) ראש דברך אמת, ואין אמת אלא שלום שנאמר (ישעי' ל"ט ח) כי יהיה שלום ואמת בימי, אפשר לאדם לומר כך, אלא כך אמר חזקיה אותה המדה שנתת לדוד אבי הוא חצי ימי, ושלום ואמת חצי ימי, על כן הזכיר ימי והזכיר שלום ואמת ובימי שהכל אחד הדא היא דכתיב שלום, (בראשית א' ה) ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד, מה היום שלום אף הוא בקש שלום שנאמר (מ"ב כ' יט) שלום ואמת יהיה בימי, באותה מדה שנתת לדוד אבי דכתיב (תהלים פ"ט לז) וכסאו כשמש נגדו:

that measure which You gave to David my father, as it is written (Psalm 89:37), ‘and his throne is like the sun before Him.’

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tzedek tzedek, the two tzedeks

Derash on the doubled word of Deuteronomy 16:20 (‘justice, justice you shall pursue’): the repetition is read as two distinct grades. The first is ‘tzedek proper’ and is identified outright with the Shekhinah (Isaiah 1:21, ‘tzedek lodges in her’), Tzedek being a standard name of the indwelling presence (later Malkhut). The second is ‘the tzedek that terrifies the righteous,’ the stern, judging face. Sod: the Shekhinah bears both a merciful and a severe aspect, and the doubled word encodes the pair. The

prooftext ‘from the brightness before Him’ (Psalm 18:13) anchors the reading in the imagery of the nogah (brightness). *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

tzedek is not tzedakah

A prooftext chain distinguishing tzedek from tzedakah (righteous-giving): tzedakah is worn ‘as a breastplate’ while tzedek is ‘a helmet of salvation on the head’ (Isaiah 59:17); ‘the head’ is truth (Psalm 119:160, ‘the head of Your word is truth’); and truth is peace (Isaiah 39:8). The equation head = truth = peace lifts tzedek above tzedakah, the stern grade is not the same as charitable giving.

Hezekiah and the measure of David

Hezekiah’s saying (2 Kings 20:19 / Isaiah 39:8, ‘peace and truth in my days’) is read so that ‘the measure (middah) You gave to David my father’ is half his days and ‘peace and truth’ the other half, ‘and all is one.’ The middah of David is the Kabbalistic grade of David (the Shekhinah / kingship), and ‘one day’ (Genesis 1:5) is glossed as peace. It closes with David’s throne ‘like the sun before Me’ (Psalm 89:37). Derash woven from prooftexts; the sod is the Shekhinah-Tzedek-David’s-measure identification.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 76-78; mercy, the attribute, and Abraham's daughter

Mercy, and a famous crux. “Make it known” heard as “have mercy,” with the mother, the Shekhinah: returning to draw her estranged sons back to their father (§ 76); “remember mercy” as the attribute that is “the Shekhinah of Israel,” given to David, borne by Solomon, traced to Abraham (§ 77); and the old question of whether Abraham had a daughter, answered yes: the blessing “with all (ba-kol)” is the daughter, the divine feminine given to him as a vessel of pearls (§ 78).

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ומאי (חבקוק ג' ב) בקרב שנים תודיע, כך אמר ידעתי שאתה האל הקדוש דכתיב (שמות ט"ו יא) מי כמוכה נאדר בקדש, וקדש בך ואתה בקדש, ואעפ"כ בקרב שנים תודיע, ומאי תודיע, תרחם, כד"א (שם ב' כה) וירא אלהים את בני ישראל וידע אלהים, מאי וידע, משל למה"ד למלך שהיתה לו אשה נאה והעמיד ממנה בנים, וחיבבם וגדלם. ויצאו לתרבות רעה שנאם ושנא אמם. חזרה אמם אליהם ואמרה בני למה אתם עושים כך שאביכם שונא אותי ואתכם, עד שנחמו וחזרו לעשות רצון אביהם, ראה אביהם כך, אהבם כבתחילה וזכר אמם הה"ד (שם) וירא אלהים וגו' וידע וגו', וכתיב (חבקוק שם) ובקרב שנים תודיע:

And what is (Habakkuk 3:2), 'in the midst of the years make it known (todia)'? Thus he said: I knew that You are the holy God, as it is written (Exodus 15:11), 'who is like You, glorious in holiness'; and holiness is in You, and You are in holiness. And even so, 'in the midst of the years make it known.' And what is 'make it known (todia)'? Have mercy (terachem). As it is said (Exodus 2:25), 'and God saw the children of Israel, and God knew.' What is 'and knew'? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a fair wife, and he raised up sons from her, and cherished them and reared them; and they went out to evil ways. He hated them and hated their mother. Their mother came back to them and said: my sons, why do you act thus, so that your father hates me and you?: until they took comfort and returned to do the will of their father. Their father saw this, [and] loved them as at first, and remembered their mother. This is what is written (ibid.), 'and God saw,' and so on, 'and knew,' and so on. And it is written (Habakkuk, ibid.), 'and in the midst of the years make it known.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי (שם) ברוגז רחם תזכור, אמר בעת שיחטאו לך בני, ותכעוס עליהם, רחם תזכור, ומאי רחם תזכור, אותו שאמר (תהלים י"ח ב) ארחמך ה' חזקי, ונתת לו המדה הזאת שהיא שכינתו של ישראל, וזכר בנו שירשה ונתת לו דכתיב (מ"א ה' כו) וה' נתן חכמה לשלמה, וזכור אביהם אברהם, דכתיב (ישעי' מ"א ח), זרע אברהם אוהבי בקרב שנים תודיע:

And what is (ibid.), 'in wrath remember mercy (rachem)'? He said: at the time when Your sons sin against You, and You are angry with them, remember mercy (rachem tizkor). And what is 'remember mercy'? That one who said (Psalm 18:2), 'I love You (erchamkha), O LORD, my strength'; and You gave him this attribute (midah), which is the Shekhinah of Israel. And remember our son who inherited it, and You gave [it] to him, as it is written (1 Kings 5:26), 'and the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon.' And remember their father Abraham, as it is written (Isaiah 41:8), 'the seed of Abraham My lover': 'in the midst of the years make it known.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

מהיכן היתה לאברהם בת, דכתיב (בראשית כ"ד א) וה' בירך את

From where did Abraham have a daughter (bat)? As it is written

אברהם בכל וכתיב, (ישעי' מ"ג ז) כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו, האי ברכה היתה בתו או לא היתה, הן בתו היתה, משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו עבד תמים ושלם לפניו נסהו בכמה נסיונות ועמד בכלן, אמר המלך מה אתן לעבד זה או מה אעשה לו, אמר אין לי אלא אצונו לאחי הגדול ליעצו ולשמרו ולכבדו, חזר העבד עם אחיו הגדול ולמד מדותיו אהבו האח מאד וקראו אוהבו דכתיב (שם מ"א ח) זרע אברהם אוהבי, אמר מה אתן לו או מה אעשה לו הנה כלי נאה עשיתי ובו מרגליות נאות אין כמותם סגולות מלכים אתננה לו ויזכה במקומו הה"ד וה' בירך את אברהם בכל:

(Genesis 24:1), 'and the LORD blessed Abraham with all (ba-kol),' and it is written (Isaiah 43:7), 'all that is called by My name, and for My glory I created it, I formed it, indeed I made it.' Was this blessing (ba-kol) his daughter, or was it not? Yes, it was his daughter. A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a perfect and complete servant before him. He tested him with several trials, and he stood firm in all of them. The king said: what shall I give to this servant, or what shall I do for him? He said: I have nothing [for it] but to command my elder brother to advise him, and to guard him, and to honor him. The servant went with his elder brother and learned his ways; the brother loved him greatly and called him 'his lover,' as it is written (Isaiah 41:8), 'the seed of Abraham My lover.' He said: what shall I give to him, or what shall I do for him? Behold, I have made a fair vessel (keli), and in it are fair pearls (margaliyot), the like of which there are none, treasures of kings; I will give it to him, and he will merit in his place. This is what is written, 'and the LORD blessed Abraham with all (ba-kol).'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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mercy as knowing; the mother reconciles

Habakkuk 3:2's 'in the midst of the years make it known (todia)' is glossed 'have mercy (terachem),' and 'God knew' (Exodus 2:25) is read through the parable of the estranged sons: a king's fair wife bore sons who went to evil ways, so the king hated them and their mother; the mother returned to them and drew them back to their father's will, and he 'loved them as at first, and remembered their mother.' Sod: the Shekhinah is the mother, the king's wife, who reconciles Israel (the sons) to the transcendent Father; 'knowing' is mercy and reunion.

the attribute given down: David, Solomon, Abraham

'Remember mercy (rachem)' is the 'attribute (midah) which is the Shekhinah of Israel': given to David, who said 'I love You (erchamkha)' (Psalm 18:2, playing on rachamim, mercy); inherited by Solomon, 'to whom the LORD gave wisdom' (1

Kings 5:26); and traced to Abraham, 'My lover' (Isaiah 41:8). Sod: Malkhut, the divine bride, as the inherited grade borne by the patriarch and the kings, the attribute of mercy possessed and transmitted through the righteous.

Abraham's daughter, 'Bakol'

Whether Abraham had a 'daughter (bat)' was an old dispute (b. Bava Batra 16b, on 'the LORD blessed Abraham ba-kol,' Genesis 24:1): some read 'Bakol' as her name. The Bahir affirms it and reads the blessing 'with all (ba-kol)' as the daughter, the Shekhinah / Malkhut given to Abraham. The parable: the tested and perfect servant (Abraham) is entrusted to the 'elder brother' (a higher grade) who calls him 'lover' (Isaiah 41:8), and is given 'a fair vessel with pearls, treasures of kings', the daughter. Sod: Malkhut is 'all (kol),' the grade that gathers the others, given to Abraham (Ḥesed) as his daughter and portion; the vessel of pearls is the Shekhinah adorned with the sefirot.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 79-80; thought without end, and the name

Thought, and the name. What Habakkuk understood and feared was the thought of the Holy One, which has no end, like the ear that is never filled, the ear that is the shape of the alef, root of the Ten Commandments (§ 79); and from the zayin in the word “ear,” a teaching that a thing’s name is its very essence: “that was its name” means “that was its body” (§ 80).

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ד"א שמעתי שמעך יראתי (חבקוק ג' ב) הבנתי שמעך יראתי, מה הבין שנתירא, הבין מחשבתו של הקב"ה, מה מחשבה אין לה קץ דהא חשיב אינש ושפיל לסופיה דעלמא אף האזן אין לה קץ ולא תשבע דכתיב (קהלת א' ח) דלא תמלא אזן משמוע, ומאי זיי"ן באוזן, מאי טעמא, מפני שהאזן דמות אל"ף, ואל"ף עיקריהן דעשרת הדברות הלכך לא תמלא האזן משמוע:

Another interpretation: 'I heard Your report, I feared' (Habakkuk 3:2): [read] 'I understood Your report, I feared.' What did he understand, that he feared? He understood the thought (machashavah) of the Holy One. What is thought? It has no end; for a person thinks and descends to the end of the world. So too the ear has no end and is not satisfied, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 1:8), 'the ear is not filled from hearing.' And what is the zayin in [the word] 'ear (ozen)'? What is the reason? Because the ear is the shape of an alef (א), and the alef is the root of the ten commandments (aseret ha-dibrot); therefore the ear is not filled from hearing.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי זיי"ן דכתיב באזן, דהא אמרינן כל מה שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא בעולמו שם מעניינו דכתיב (בראשית כ' י"ט) וכל אשר יקרא לו האדם נפש חיה הוא שמו, כלומר הוא גופו הוי כך, ומנלן דשמו גופו הוי דכתיב

And what is the zayin that is written in [the word] 'ear (ozen)'? For we say: everything that the Holy One brought into His world, its name is [drawn] from its nature, as it is written (Genesis 20:19 in the source; the verse is at 2:19), 'and whatever the man called each

(משלי י’ ז) זכר צדיק לברכה
ושם רשעים ירקב, אטו שמו
ירקב אלא גופו, הכי נמי גופו:

living creature (nefesh chayah), that was its name’, that is to say, that was its body [its very self]. So it is. And whence [do we know] that its name is its body? As it is written (Proverbs 10:7), ‘the memory of the righteous is a blessing, and the name of the wicked shall rot.’ Does his name rot? Rather, his body. So too here: his body.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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thought and the ear without end

Re-reading Habakkuk 3:2's 'I heard' as 'I understood': what Habakkuk understood, and feared, was 'the thought (machashavah) of the Holy One,' which 'has no end', a person thinks and descends to the end of the world, like the ear that 'is not filled from hearing' (Ecclesiastes 1:8). And the ear is the

shape of the alef, and the alef 'is the root of the Ten Commandments.' Sod: thought (machashavah), the supernal grade of § 70, the threshold of the Infinite, is boundless, and the ear and the alef, the organ and the letter of reception, open toward it without limit.

the name as the essence

The zayin in 'ear (ozen)' leads to a doctrine of the name: everything the Holy One brought into the world has 'its name from its nature.' 'Whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name' (Genesis 2:19), 'that was its body,' its very self. And Proverbs 10:7, 'the name of the wicked shall rot': it is not the name that rots but the body, so the name IS the body. Sod: the identity of name and essence, foundational to the name-mysticism of the tradition, a name is not a label affixed to a thing but its very being (cf. the divine Name housed in thought, § 70).

Editorial decisions

- **§80 Genesis citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites Genesis 20:19 (an impossible locus, Genesis 20 has only 18 verses) for 'whatever the man called each living creature,' which is Genesis 2:19 (a bet/kaf scribal slip). Rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 81-83; the letters and the seven limbs

The letters as forces, and the body as a map of the divine. The shin like a tree's crooked root, the zayin as the seven days, and boundless wisdom in the ear (§ 81); the seven limbs made in the image of God, mirrored by their "powers in heaven," the vav as six extremities (§ 82); and the nun, the brain and the spinal cord, the bent nun as foundation, the long nun as male and female (§ 83).

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כגון מאי, כגון שרש דשי"ן, דומיא דשרש האילן, ושורש כל האילן הוא מעוקם, ושי"ן בתרא מאי עבידתיה, ללמדך שאם תקח ענף ותטעהו ישוב שרש, זיי"ן מאי עבידתיה, כמנין ימי השבוע, ללמדך שכל יום יש לו ומאי עבידתיה הכא, ללמדך שיש חכמה גדולה באוזן לאין תכלית כך יש הכח בכל האיברים:

For example, what? Like the root of a shin (ש), similar to the root of a tree; and the root of every tree is crooked. And the latter shin, what is its function? To teach you that if you take a branch and plant it, it will again [become] a root. The zayin (ז), what is its function? Like the number of the days of the week; to teach you that each day has [its own power]. And what is its function here? To teach you that there is great wisdom (chokhmah) in the ear, without limit; so too there is power in all the limbs.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי איברים שבע שיש באדם, דכתיב (בראשית ט' ו) כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם, וכתיב (שם א כ"ז) בצלם אלהים ברא אותו, בכל איבריו ובכל חלקיו, והא אמרינן ו' למה הוא דומה לעוטה אור כשלמה (תהלים ק"ד ה), דהא ו' אינו אלא שש קצות, א"ל ברית מילה וזוגו של אדם חשבינן חד ושתי ידיו שלשה, ראשו וגופו חמשה שתי שוקיו

And what are the limbs? Seven that are in a person, as it is written (Genesis 9:6), 'for in the image of God He made man,' and it is written (Genesis 1:27), 'in the image of God He created him', in all his limbs and all his parts. And behold, we said: the vav (ו), to what is it like? To 'the One who wraps light like a garment' (Psalm 104:5 in the source; the verse is at 104:2); for the vav is nothing but six extremities. He said: the covenant

שבעה, וכנגדן כוחותם בשמים דכתיב (קהלת ז' יד) גם את זה לעומת זה עשה האלהים, והיינו ימים (שמות ל"א יז) כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ, ולא אמר בששת ימים מלמד כי כל יום ויום יש לו כחו:

of circumcision and a man's mate we reckon as one; and his two hands, three; his head and his body, five; his two legs, seven. And corresponding to them are their powers in heaven, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 7:14), 'God has made this corresponding to that (zeh le'umat zeh)'; and these are the days (Exodus 31:17), 'for six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth', and it did not say 'in six days,' teaching that each and every day has its power.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי נו"ן, ללמדך שהמוח הוא עיקר חוט השדרה, ומשם הוא שואף תמיד, אלמלא חוט השדרה לא יתקיים המוח, ובלי מוח לא יתקיים הגוף, כי כל הגוף הוא לצורך המוח, ואם לא יתקיים כל הגוף לא יתקיים המוח, על כן חוט השדרה מריק לכל הגוף מן המוח, והיא נו"ן כפופה, והא נו"ן זאת ארוכה היא, נו"ן ארוכה לעולם בהשלמת המלה, ללמדך שנו"ן ארוכה כוללת הכפופה וארוכה,

And what is the nun (נ)? To teach you that the brain (mo'ach) is the root of the spinal cord, and from there it draws continually; were it not for the spinal cord, the brain would not endure; and without the brain, the body would not endure, for the whole body is for the sake of the brain; and if the whole body did not endure, the brain would not endure. Therefore the spinal cord pours out to the whole body from the brain; and it is a bent nun (נ). But this nun is a long one (ן)! The long nun is always at the completion of a

אבל כפופה יסוד, ללמדך שנו"ן ארוכה כלולה מזכר ונקבה:

word, to teach you that the long nun includes the bent and the long; but the bent is foundation (yesod), to teach you that the long nun is composed of male and female.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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the letters and the wisdom in the ear

Continuing the letters of ‘ear (ozen)’: the shin like a tree’s crooked root (a planted branch becomes a root again), the zayin as the seven days of the week, each with its power. The lesson: ‘there is great wisdom (chokhmah) in the ear, without limit; so too there is power in all the limbs.’ Sod: the letters as living forces; the receptive ear holds boundless wisdom, and the members of the body carry the powers of the grades.

the seven limbs and the six days

Man is made 'in the image of God' (Genesis 9:6; 1:27) in all his limbs. The seven are counted, the covenant of circumcision (with a man's mate) as one, the two hands (three), the head and body (five), the two legs (seven), and 'corresponding to them are their powers in heaven,' 'this corresponding to that' (Ecclesiastes 7:14). The vav (ו), 'nothing but six extremities,' is the six days and directions; 'six days the LORD made' (not 'in six days') teaches that each day has its own power. Sod: the human form mirrors the divine structure, the six lower grades and directions, with the covenant (Yesod), each limb a grade; 'as above, so below.'

the nun: brain and spine, male and female

The nun teaches the mutual dependence of the brain (mo'ach) and the spinal cord: the brain is the root, the cord draws from it and pours to the whole body, and each sustains the other. The bent nun (נ) is 'foundation (yesod)'; the long, final nun (ן), which stands at a word's completion, 'includes the bent and the long,' and so is 'composed of male and female.' Sod: the bent nun as Yesod, the covenant-grade and channel; the long nun as the union of male and female that Yesod effects; the spinal cord as the conduit of the flow to the body of the grades.

Editorial decisions

- **§82 Psalm citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites Psalm 104:5 for ‘the One who wraps light like a garment,’ which is Psalm 104:2 (a he/bet scribal slip). Rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 84-86; the mem and the nun, male and female

The letters as male and female. The open mem composed of both, the closed mem a belly (§ 84); “mem” as “mayim,” water and the moist belly, the essence male and the open form added for the female (§ 85); and the reason the letters are doubled, “the woman is cold” and must be warmed by the male, and “his name shall be continued” through two nuns: it must be by male and female (§ 86).

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מ"ם פתוחה, מאי מ"ם פתוחה,
כלולה מזכר ונקבה, מ"ם סתומה
מאי, עשויה היא כמין בטן
מלמעלה, והא אמר רבי רחומאי,
הבטן כמין ט, ההוא דאמר כמין ט
בפנים, אנא דאמרו כמין ט בחוץ:

An open mem (מ), what is the open mem? Composed of male and female. A closed mem (ם), what? It is made like a kind of belly (beten) from above. And Rabbi Rechumai said: the belly is like a tet (ט). That one said 'like a tet within'; but I say 'like a tet without.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי מ"ם, אל תקרי מ"ם אלא מים מה המים הללו לחים אף הבטן לח לעולם, ולמה מ"ם פחותה כלולה מזכר ונקבה וסתומה זכר, ללמדך שעיקר המ"ם הוא זכר, והוסיפה פתוחה לשם נקבה, ומה הזכר הזה אינו מוליד בפתיחה אף מ"ם סתומה אינה מולדת אלא בפתוחה, ומה הנקבה מולידה בפתוחה אף מ"ם סתומה ופתוחה. לט:

And what is mem? Do not read 'mem' but 'mayim (water)': as this water is moist, so the belly is always moist. And why is the open mem composed of male and female, and the closed one male? To teach you that the essence of the mem is male, and the open was added for the [sake of the] female. And as this male does not give birth in [the state of] opening, so the closed mem does not give birth except through the open; and as the female gives birth in opening, so [with] the mem, closed and open.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומה ראית לרבות מ"ם בפתיחה וסתימה, משום דאמרינן אל תקרי מ"ם אלא מים, והאשה קרה על כן צריכה להתחמם בזכר, ומה ראית לרבות נו"ן כפופה וארוכה דכתיב (תהלים ע"ב יז) לפני שמש ינון שמו, משני נוני"ן, נו"ן כפופה

And what did you see, to derive the mem in opening and closing? Because we say, do not read 'mem' but 'mayim'; and the woman is cold, therefore she needs to be warmed by the male. And what did you see, to derive the nun as bent and long? As it is written (Psalm 72:17), 'before the sun his name shall be continued (yinnon)': from

וארוכה, וצריך להיות ע"י זכר ונקבה:	two nuns, a bent nun and a long [one]; and it must be by [means of] male and female.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the open and closed mem; the belly

The open mem (מ) is ‘composed of male and female,’ the closed final mem (ם) ‘made like a belly from above.’ A dispute (Rabbi Rechumai) whether the belly’s tet-shape is seen ‘within’ or ‘without.’ Sod: the two forms of the mem as two aspects of the generative, the open (male-and-female, generative) and the closed (the sealed womb); the letter-shapes read as figures of gender and gestation.

mem as water; male and female

'Mem' is read as 'mayim (water)': as water is moist, so the belly. The essence of the mem is male (the closed), and the open form 'was added for the female'; the closed 'does not give birth except through the open,' as the male generates only through the female. Sod: the letter as the union of male and female, its closed and open forms figuring the sealed and the opened. (The source reads 'pechuta,' lesser, where the sense and § 84 require 'petucha,' open, a chet/tav scribal slip, rendered 'open'; and § 85 ends with an illegible fragment in the source.)

why the two mems and the two nuns

The mem is derived 'in opening and closing' because 'mem' is 'mayim (water)' and 'the woman is cold' and must be 'warmed by the male', the union. And the nun is derived 'bent and long' from Psalm 72:17, 'before the sun his name shall be continued (yinnon)', a word written with two nuns, a bent and a long, 'and it must be by male and female.' Sod: the doubled letter-forms as the necessary pairing of male and female, the union that generates and endures (the name 'continued before the sun,' read in the tradition of the enduring, even messianic, name).

Editorial decisions

- **§85 pechuta and the trailing fragment.** The source reads ‘mem pechuta’ (lesser), rendered ‘open mem’ (petucha) per the sense and § 84’s usage, a chet/tav scribal slip, and flagged in the apparatus. § 85 ends with an illegible fragment (‘לט’) in the source, preserved in the verbatim Hebrew and noted, not rendered into English.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 87-88; the ear, the eye, and thought

One of the Bahir's decisive statements on thought. The ear and the eye are never filled because both draw from thought, the king all creation needs (§ 87); and thought is why the tradition says a thing "arose" in thought, never "descended", the chariot-vision is "gazed at" and involves descent, but thought has no gazing and no limit, so no descent: one may plumb another's mind (da'at), never his thought (machashavah) (§ 88).

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כתיב (קהלת א' ח) ולא תמלא אזן משמוע, וכתיב (שם) ולא תשבע עין לראות, מלמד ששניהם שואבים מן המחשבה, ומאי מחשבה, מלך שצריכים לו כל מה שנברא העולם בעליונים ובתחתונים:

It is written (Ecclesiastes 1:8), 'the ear is not filled from hearing,' and it is written (ibid.), 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing': teaching that both of them draw from thought (machashavah). And what is thought? A king whom all that was created in the world needs: in the upper [worlds] and in the lower.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי הוה הא דאמרינן עלה במחשבה, ולא אמרינן ירד, דהא אמרינן המסתכל בצפיית המרכבה ירד ואח"כ יעלה, התם משום דאמרינן המסתכל בצפיית המרכבה, וצפיית מתרגמינן סכותא ואמרינן (ישעי' כ"א ח) ויקרא אריה על מצפה אדני, הכא במחשבה לית ליה צפייה כלל ולית ליה תכלית כלל, וכל דלית ליה תכלית וסוף לית ליה ירידה, כדאמרי אינשי ירד פלוני לסוף דעתו של חבירו לא לסוף מחשבתו:

And what is [the reason] that we say 'it arose in thought (alah ba-machashavah)' and we do not say 'it descended'? For we say: one who gazes at the vision of the chariot (tzefiyat ha-merkavah) descends and afterward ascends. There [it says] 'descends' because we say 'one who gazes upon the vision of the chariot,' and 'vision (tzefiyah)' we render [in Aramaic as] 'sekhuta,' and it says (Isaiah 21:8), 'and he called: a lion! upon the watchtower (mitzpeh) of the Lord.' Here, with thought, there is no 'gazing' at all, and no limit at all; and everything that has no limit and no end has no descent, as people say, 'so-and-so descended to the depth of his fellow's mind

(da'at)', and not 'to the depth of his thought (machashavah).'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the ear, the eye, and thought

Ecclesiastes 1:8, ‘the ear is not filled from hearing’ and ‘the eye is not satisfied with seeing’, teaches that both organs ‘draw from thought (machashavah).’ Thought is ‘a king whom all that was created needs, in the upper and the lower [worlds].’ Sod: machashavah, the supernal grade and the reach toward the Infinite (§ 70, § 79), is the inexhaustible source from which hearing and seeing draw, and on which all creation, above and below, depends.

why ‘it arose in thought,’ never ‘descended’

The classical phrase ‘it arose in [God’s] thought (alah ba-machashavah)’ always says ‘arose,’ never ‘descended.’ The Bahir’s reason: one who ‘gazes at the vision of the chariot (tzefiyat ha-merkavah)’ is said to ‘descend’, because ‘gazing (tzefiyah)’ is a look from a height (rendered in Aramaic ‘sekhuta,’ of a piece with the ‘watchtower,’ mitzpeh, of Isaiah 21:8). But thought has ‘no gazing at all, and no limit at all,’ and what is limitless has no ‘descent.’ Hence the idiom: one may ‘descend to the depth of another’s mind (da’at)’, da’at can be plumbed, but never ‘to the depth of his thought (machashavah).’ Sod: machashavah is the boundless supernal grade, above even the chariot-vision and beyond da’at, the lower knowing; it is reached only by ascent, never mapped or fathomed. One of the Bahir’s decisive statements on the limitlessness of the highest grade.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 89-90; the cantillation marks and the crown

The cantillation marks, read as the ascent of the grades. The segol named “the treasure,” following the zarka that is “thrown” (§ 89); and the zarka’s throw as the crown rising toward “His place” that none can know, to the head of the Acquirer of heaven and earth, standing “at the head of all the letters”, the crown, Keter, cast up toward the unknowable Godhead (§ 90).

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ישב רבי אמוראי ודרש מאי דכתיב סגול, אלא סגולה שמה כדאיתא לעיל, בתר זרקא, מ"ט זרקא, כשמו כן הוא דהוא נזרק כגון דבר הנזרק ובתריה אתיא סגולת מלכים והמדינות:

Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: what is [the meaning of] that which is written 'segol'? Rather, 'segulah (treasure)' is its name, as [stated] above: [it comes] after the zarka. What is the reason [it is called] 'zarka'? As its name, so it is: for it is thrown (nizrak), like a thing that is thrown; and after it comes 'the treasure (segulat) of kings and the provinces.'

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ומ"ט זרקא, דכתיב (יחזקאל ג' מב) ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו, מכלל דליכא דידע את מקומו, ואמרינן שם אתגא ואתיא לראש קונה, דכתיב (בראשית י"ד יט) קונה שמים וארץ, וכד אזלא הוי כזרקא וסגולה אבתריה והוי בראש כל אותיות:

And what is the reason [for] 'zarka'? As it is written (Ezekiel 3:42 in the source; the verse is at 3:12), 'blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place': from which [we learn] that none knows His place. And we say there [is] a crown (taga), and it comes to the head of the Acquirer (koneh), as it is written (Genesis 14:19), 'Acquirer of heaven and earth (koneh shamayim va-aretz)'; and when it goes, it is like a zarka, and the treasure (segulah) after it, and it is at the head of all the letters.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the segol and the zarka

Rabbi Amorai expounds two cantillation marks. The ‘segol’ (three dots) is named ‘segulah (treasure),’ and it follows the ‘zarka’; the zarka is so called because it is ‘thrown (nizrak),’ like a thing cast, and after it comes ‘the treasure (segulat) of kings and the provinces’ (an allusion to Ecclesiastes 2:8). Sod: the cantillation marks are read as figures of the grades and their motion, the zarka the throw upward, the segulah the treasured grade that follows in its train.

the crown thrown to the hidden place

The zarka is ‘thrown’ because of ‘blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place’ (Ezekiel 3:12): ‘His place’ that none can know. And the ‘crown (taga)’ rises ‘to the head of the Acquirer (koneh) of heaven and earth’ (Genesis 14:19), goes up like a zarka with the ‘treasure (segulah)’ after it, and stands ‘at the head of all the letters.’ Sod: the crown is Keter, the highest grade, cast upward toward the unknowable ‘place’ of the Godhead (the reach toward Ein Sof); the cantillation’s upward throw figures the ascent of the crown above all the letters and grades. (The source cites Ezekiel 3:42, an impossible locus; the verse is at 3:12.)

Editorial decisions

- **§90 Ezekiel citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites Ezekiel 3:42, an impossible locus (Ezekiel 3 has 27 verses), for ‘blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place,’ which is Ezekiel 3:12 (a mem/yod scribal slip, 42 for 12). Rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 91-93; the crown-stone, the tekhelet, and the paths

The crown, and the blue thread of the fringe. The crown as the precious stone, the rejected stone become the cornerstone: rising to the place it was hewn from (§ 91); the tekhelet and the thirty-two paths of the king's garden, tended by the guarding powers (§ 92); and the tekhelet as the doubled sign, the seal of both the King and his daughter, that guards the servant on the way (§ 93).

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ומאי טעמא היא בסוף התיבה ואינה בראשה, ללמדך שאותה תגא עולה עד למעלה למעלה, ומאי משמע דהאי תגא אבן יקרה היא מכוללת ומעוטרת דכתיב (תהלים קי"ח כב) אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פנה, ועולה עד המקום אשר נחצבה ממנו דכתיב (בראשית מ"ט כד) משם רועה אבן ישראל. מא:

And what is the reason that it is at the end of the word and not at its beginning? To teach you that this crown (taga) rises up to the highest heights. And what implies that this crown is a precious stone (even yekara), whole and crowned? As it is written (Psalm 118:22), 'the stone the builders rejected became the head of the corner'; and it rises up to the place from which it was hewn, as it is written (Genesis 49:24), 'from there, the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ועוד אמר מאי טעמא אנו מטילין תכלת בציצית, ומאי טעמא שלשים ושתים, משל למה ה"ד למלך שהיה לו גן נאה ולו ל"ב נתיבות ושם שומר עליהם והודיע לו לבדו אותן הנתיבות, א"ל שומרם ולך בהם בכל יום ובכל זמן שתדרכם שלום לך, ומה עשה אותו השומר, שם שומרים עליהם, אמר אם אני אהיה לבדי באלה הנתיבות אי אפשר לשומר אחד לקיים כל אלה הנתיבות, ועוד כי יאמרו העולם כילי הוא

And further he said: what is the reason that we place tekhelet (blue) in the fringe (tzitzit)? And what is the reason [that it is] thirty-two? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a fair garden, and it had thirty-two paths (netivot); and he set a guard over them, and made known to him alone those paths. He said to him: guard them, and walk in them every day; and whenever you tread them, peace be to you. And what did that guard do? He set [other] guards over them. He said: if I am

מלך זה לכך שם שומר זה שומרים אחרים לכל הנתיבות, אלה הם ל"ב נתיבות:

alone in these paths, it is not possible for one guard to maintain all these paths; and moreover, the world will say this king is stingy: therefore this guard set other guards over all the paths. These are the thirty-two paths.

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ומ"ט דתכלת, אמר השומר שמא יאמרו השומרים האלה הגן שלנו הוא, נתן להם סימן, ואמר להם ראו זה סימן של מלך שהוא שלו הגן הזה ואלה הנתיבות הוא תקנם ואינם שלי, והנה חותמו, משל למה"ד למלך ובתו שהיו להם עבדים ובקשו לילך למרחוק פחדו מאימת המלך נתן להם המלך סימנו, פחדו מן הבת, נתנה להם סימן, אמרו מעתה בשני סמנים אלה (תהלים קכא ז) ה' ישמרך מכל רע ישמור את נפשך. מב:

And what is the reason for the tekhelet? The guard said: lest these guards say 'the garden is ours,' he gave them a sign, and said to them: see, this is the sign of the king, that this garden is his, and these paths: he ordered them, and they are not mine; and behold, his seal. A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king and his daughter, who had servants, and they wished to go far off. They feared the dread of the king; the king gave them his sign. They feared the daughter; she gave them a sign. They said: from now on, with these two signs (Psalm 121:7), 'the LORD will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

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the crown as the precious stone

Continuing § 90: the crown (taga) stands at a word's end, not its start, because it 'rises up to the highest heights.' This crown is 'a precious stone (even yekara), whole and crowned', 'the stone the builders rejected [that] became the head of the corner' (Psalm 118:22), and it rises to 'the place from which it was hewn,' 'the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel' (Genesis 49:24). Sod: the crown is Keter, the supernal stone, rejected below and exalted above, returning to its unknowable source (the reach toward Ein Sof).

the tekhelet and the thirty-two paths

Why the blue (tekhelet) of the fringe (tzitzit), and why thirty-two? A king with a fair garden of thirty-two paths sets a guard, who appoints further guards, one cannot keep all the paths, and the king must not seem stingy, 'these are the thirty-two paths.' Sod: the thirty-two paths of wisdom (Sefer Yetzirah 1:1; cf. §§ 63, 98) tended by guarding powers; the tekhelet, the blue thread, is the sign of that whole order.

the tekhelet as the two signs

The guard gives the lesser guards a ‘sign’, the king’s seal, lest they claim the garden as their own. A parable: a king and his daughter whose servants, going far off, feared the king (so he gave his sign) and feared the daughter (so she gave hers); ‘with these two signs’, ‘the LORD will guard you from all evil, He will guard your soul’ (Psalm 121:7). Sod: the tekhelet bears the seal of both the King (the transcendent) and the Daughter (the Shekhinah); the doubled sign that guards the servant on the way.

Editorial decisions

- **trailing numerals.** § 91 ends with ‘מא’ and § 93 with ‘מב’ in the source, stray numerals (likely an alternate siman-numbering or folio marker in the transcription, not text). Preserved in the verbatim Hebrew and not rendered into English.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 94; the seventy-two names and the twelve tribes

The uncontainable God, read into a hidden order of numbers. “The heavens cannot contain You” teaches that the Holy One has seventy-two names, fixed in the twelve tribes, six names to a stone, twelve stones that are seventy-two: twelve leaders each with six powers, matching the seventy-two nations and tongues of the earth. The same seventy-two-fold Name the next section unfolds from Exodus 14:19-21.

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ישב ר׳ אמוראי ודרש מאי דכתיב (מ״א ח׳ כז) הנה השמים ושמי השמים לא יכלכלוך, מלמד שע״ב שמות יש לו להקב״ה וכולם קבעם בשבטים דכתיב (שמות כ״ח י) ששה משמותם על האבן האחת ואת שמות הששה הנותרים על האבן השנית כתולדותם, וכתיב (יהושע ד׳ ט) ושתים עשרה אבנים הקים וגו׳, מה אלה אבני זכרון אף אלה אבני זכרון, ושתים עשרה אבנים הם ע״ב כנגד ע״ב שמות של הקב״ה, ומאי טעמא התחיל בשתים עשרה, ללמדך שי״ב מנהיגים יש לו להקב״ה ובכל אחד ואחד ששה כוחות׳ ומאי נינהו, ע״ב לשונות:

Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: what is written (1 Kings 8:27), ‘behold, the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You’? [This] teaches that the Holy One has seventy-two names, and He fixed them all in the tribes (shevatim), as it is written (Exodus 28:10), ‘six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the second stone, according to their generations’; and it is written (Joshua 4:9), ‘and twelve stones he set up,’ and so on. As these are stones of remembrance (avnei zikaron), so these are stones of remembrance; and the twelve stones are seventy-two, corresponding to the seventy-two names of the Holy One. And what is the reason that he began with twelve? To teach you that the Holy One has twelve leaders (manhigim), and in each and every one, six powers (kochot); and what are they? Seventy-two tongues (leshonot).

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the seventy-two names and the twelve tribes

'The heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You' (1 Kings 8:27) teaches that the Holy One has seventy-two names, fixed in the twelve tribes: their names, six on each of the two stones of the ephod (Exodus 28:10), and the twelve 'stones of remembrance' (Joshua 4:9), twelve stones that are seventy-two (twelve times six), matching the seventy-two names. He 'began with twelve' because the Holy One has twelve leaders (manhigim), each with six powers, seventy-two, corresponding to the seventy-two 'tongues' (the seventy-two nations and languages of the earth, Genesis 10). Sod: the seventy-two-fold Name, unfolded from the three verses of Exodus 14:19-21 in the section that follows (§ 95), governs the whole created order through the twelve grades or tribes and their six powers each,

and over the seventy-two nations; the twelve-times-six that patterns Israel below and the Name above.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 95; the cosmic tree and the twelve diagonal boundaries

The Bahir sets its cosmic tree inside the architecture of space: around the tree are the twelve diagonal boundaries, the edges of the cube of the world from the Sefer Yetzirah: governed by the teli, the galgal, and the lev, and built by a dense numerology from thirty-six through the thirty-two paths to the seventy-two Names of God.

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ואילן אחד יש לו להקב"ה ובו שנים עשר גבולי אלכסונין גבול מזרחית צפונית, גבול מזרחית דרומית, גבול מזרחית רומית, גבול מזרחית תחתית, גבול מערבית דרומית, גבול מערבית צפונית, גבול מערבית רומית, גבול מערבית תחתית, גבול דרומית רומית, גבול דרומית תחתית, גבול צפונית רומית, גבול צפונית תחתית ומרחיבין והולכין עד עדי עד, והם זרועות עולם, ובפנים בהם הוא האילן, ובכל אלו האלכסונין יש כנגדם פקידים והם שנים עשר י', וגם בפנים בגלגל י"ב פקידים, אלה שלשים וששה פקידים עם האלכסונים, ולכל אחד יש אחד כדכתיב (קהלת ה' ז) כי גבוה מעל גבוה שומר, נמצא לרוח מזרחית תשעה, לרוח מערבית תשעה, לרוח צפונית תשעה, לרוח דרומית תשעה, והיינו י"ב וי"ב וי"ב שהם פקידים בתלי, וגלגל ולב, והם ל"ו, וכלם ל"ו מל"ו שכח האחד בחבירו ואע"פ ששנים עשר בכל אחד ואחד מן השלשה כלם אדוקין זה בזה, וכל השלשים וששה כחות נמצאים בראשון שהוא תלי, אם תדרשם בגלגל תמצאם אותם עצמם, ואם תדרשם בלב תמצא אותם עצמם,

And the Holy One, blessed be He, has one tree, and in it are twelve diagonal boundaries (gevulei alakhsonin): the north-east boundary, the south-east boundary, the upper-east boundary, the lower-east boundary; the south-west boundary, the north-west boundary, the upper-west boundary, the lower-west boundary; the upper-south boundary, the lower-south boundary; the upper-north boundary, the lower-north boundary. And they widen and extend forever and ever, and they are the arms of the world; and within them is the tree. And corresponding to all these diagonals there are officers (pekidim), and they are twelve; and also within, in the sphere (galgal), twelve officers, these are thirty-six officers together with the diagonals. And each one has one over it, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 5:7), 'for one higher than the high watches.' So there are nine to the east wind, nine to the west wind, nine to the north wind, nine to the south wind; and this is twelve and twelve and twelve, which are the officers in the teli (the axis), the galgal (the sphere), and the lev (the heart), and they are thirty-six. And all of them are thirty-six out of thirty-six, for the power of the one

הלכך לכל אחד ל"ו וכלם אינם יותר מל"ו צורות, וכלם נשלמו בל"ב מסור לל"ב ל"ב ונשארו ארבעה והם ס"ד צורות, ומנלן דנמסר ל"ב לל"ב דכתיב (שם) כי גבוה מעל גבוה שומר, א"כ היינו ס"ד, חסר שמונה לע"ב שמותיו של הקב"ה והיינו דכתיב (שם) וגבוהים עליהם, והם ז' ימי השבוע וחסר א' והיינו דכתיב (שם ח) ויתרון ארץ בכל היא מלך, ומאי יתרון, מקום שמשם נחצב הארץ, והוא יתרון ממה שהיה, ומאי ניהו יתרון כל דבר שבעולם כשאנשי העולם ראוים לקחת מזיוו אז הוא יתרון:

is in its fellow; and although there are twelve in each one of the three, they all cleave to one another. And all thirty-six powers are found in the first, which is the teli; if you seek them in the galgal you find those same ones, and if you seek them in the lev you find those same ones. Therefore each one has thirty-six, and all of them are no more than thirty-six forms. And they are all completed in thirty-two: thirty-two given over to thirty-two, and four remain, and they are sixty-four forms. And how do we know that thirty-two was given over to thirty-two? As it is written (ibid.), 'for one higher than the high watches.' If so, this is sixty-four, lacking eight for the seventy-two names of the Holy One, and this is what is written (ibid.), 'and higher ones are over them.' And they are the seven days of the week, lacking one. And this is what is written (Ecclesiastes 5:8), 'and the profit of the earth is in all; a king.' And what is the 'profit' (yitron)? The place from which the earth was hewn; and it is a surplus over what [already] was. And what is it? The surplus of everything in the world: when the people of the world are worthy to receive from its radiance (ziv), then it is a profit.

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An orientation

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the tree and the twelve diagonal boundaries

Remez/sod: the twelve ‘diagonal boundaries’ (gevulei alakhsonin) are the twelve edges of the cube of space, the twelve diagonals that join the six directions, taken directly from Sefer Yetzirah (5:1-2). They ‘widen and extend forever’ as the ‘arms of the world’ (Deuteronomy 33:27, ‘the everlasting arms’), and within them stands the cosmic tree of the divine powers. This ties the tree of Bahir §§118-119 to the spatial cosmogony of the Sefer Yetzirah; see the Hekhal Sefer Yetzirah edition.

the teli, the galgal, and the lev

The three governing principles are the 'witnesses' of Sefer Yetzirah 6:1-3: the teli (the celestial axis, the imagined dragon along which the heavens turn), the galgal (the sphere / the wheel of the year), and the lev (the heart, the seat of the soul). Each governs twelve officers, so three times twelve is thirty-six; and because 'the power of one is in its fellow,' the same thirty-six are found whether sought in the teli, the galgal, or the lev.

the numerology 36 to 64 to 72 (a crux)

Derash by number, and a genuine difficulty: from the thirty-six officers the passage builds, through the thirty-two (the thirty-two paths of Wisdom of Sefer Yetzirah 1:1), a count that reaches sixty-four ('thirty-two given to thirty-two, and four remain') and then, 'lacking eight,' the seventy-two, the seventy-two Names of the Holy One (the seventy-two-letter Name, derived from the three seventy-two-letter verses of Exodus 14:19-21), anchored in Ecclesiastes 5:7. The internal steps ('four remain,' 'the seven days lacking one') do not resolve transparently; the arithmetic is rendered literally and flagged as a crux (see the ambiguity entry), not smoothed.

the yitron and the radiance (Ecclesiastes 5:8)

The 'profit of the earth' (yitron, Ecclesiastes 5:8) is read not economically but as a surplus of being: 'the place from which

the earth was hewn,' the higher source, 'a surplus over what already was.' It becomes an actual profit only 'when the people of the world are worthy to receive from its radiance (ziv)', the flow made available to the worthy, the same overflow the tree channels.

Editorial decisions

- **the 36->64->72 count.** Rendered the numbers literally and flagged the arithmetic as a crux among the ambiguities; did not force a resolution of the internal steps. *(provisional draft, 2026-07-01)*

Sefer ha-Bahir § 96; the sea of wisdom and the throne

The source-grade behind the crown-stone. The earth from which heaven was hewn is the throne, the precious stone, the sea of wisdom, and the blue thread of the fringe corresponds to it. Rabbi Meir's chain climbs from the tekhelet: it resembles the sea, the sea the firmament, the firmament the Throne of Glory, the sapphire under God's feet. The Throne, the sea, is the supernal mother Binah.

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ומאי ניהו ארץ שנחצבה ממנו שמים והוא כסאו של הקב"ה, והוא אבן יקרה, והוא ים החכמה וכנגדה תכלת בציצית, דאמר ר' מאיר מה נשתנה תכלת מכל מיני צבעונין מפני שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע דומה לכסא הכבוד שנאמר (שמות כ"ד י) ויראו את אלהי ישראל ותחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הספיר וכעצם השמים לטהר, ואומר (יחזקאל א' כו) כמראה אבן הספיר דמות כסא:

And what is it? The earth from which the heavens were hewn, and it is the throne of the Holy One; and it is a precious stone (even yekara), and it is the sea of wisdom (yam ha-chokhmah); and corresponding to it is the tekhelet (blue) in the fringe (tzitzit). For Rabbi Meir said: why is tekhelet [singled out] from all the kinds of colors? Because tekhelet resembles the sea, and the sea resembles the firmament (raki'a), and the firmament resembles the Throne of Glory (kisei ha-kavod), as it is said (Exodus 24:10), 'and they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet like a work of sapphire brickwork (livnat ha-sapir), and like the very heaven for purity'; and it says (Ezekiel 1:26), 'like the appearance of a sapphire stone, the likeness of a throne.'

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An orientation

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the sea of wisdom and the Throne of Glory

'The earth from which the heavens were hewn' (cf. § 91) is the throne of the Holy One, 'a precious stone,' 'the sea of wisdom (yam ha-chokhmah)', and the tekhelet of the fringe corresponds to it. Rabbi Meir's chain (b. Menachot 43b, b. Chullin 89a): the tekhelet resembles the sea, the sea the firmament, the firmament the Throne of Glory, 'under His feet like a work of sapphire' (Exodus 24:10), 'the likeness of a throne' of sapphire (Ezekiel 1:26). Sod: the Throne, the 'sea,' is the supernal mother Binah, hewn from Ḥokhmah and the wellspring of the lower flow; the blue thread draws the eye up the whole ladder, sea, sky, throne, to the sapphire seat of the Glory.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 97-100; the Heart, the tree, and the forms

The offering, the tree, and the forms that guard the way. The offering read as lifting God up in prayer, and the righteous who nourish "the Heart" (§ 97); the lulav as Israel's inner tree and its thirty-two paths of wisdom, each watched by a form (§ 98); the cherubim and the whirling sword on the paths that preceded Eden, and heaven as fire (§ 99); and heaven as the very Name of the Holy One, whose power precedes all the forms (§ 100).

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ישב ר’ ברכיה ודרש מאי דכתיב (שמות כ”ה ב) ויקחו לי תרומה, הרימו אותי בתפלותיכם ’ ומי, אותו שנדבו לבו להמשך מן העוה”ז, כבדוהו כי בו אני שמח שיודע שמי, וממנו ראוי לקחת את תרומתי שנאמר (שם ב) מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לבו תקחו את תרומתי, מאותו המתנדב, ואמר ר’ רחומאי הצדיקים והחסידים שבישראל שמרימין אותי על כל העולם בזכותיהן ומהן מתפרנס הלב והלב מפרנסן:

Rabbi Berakhiah sat and expounded: what is written (Exodus 25:2), ‘and let them take for Me an offering (terumah)’? Lift Me up (harimu oti) by your prayers. And who [is worthy]? The one whose heart moved him to be drawn away from this world, honor him, for in him I rejoice, since he knows My name; and from him it is fitting to take My offering, as it is said (ibid. 25:2), ‘from every man whose heart moves him you shall take My offering’, from that willing one. And Rabbi Rechumai said: the righteous and the pious of Israel, who lift Me up over all the world by their merits; and from them the Heart (lev) is nourished, and the Heart nourishes them.

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וכל הצורות הקדושות ממונות על כל האומות וישראל קדושים נטלו גוף האילן ולבו, מה לב שהוא הדר פרי הגוף, אף ישראל נטלו פרי עץ הדר, מה אילן תמר ענפיו

And all the holy forms (tzurot) are appointed over all the nations, and Israel are holy; they took the body of the tree and its heart. As the heart is the beauty of the fruit of

סביביו ולולבו באמצע אף ישראל נטלו גוף האילן זה שהוא ל ב ו, וכנגד הגוף חוט השדרה באדם שהוא עיקר הגוף, ומה לולב זה כתיב לו לב אף לב מסור לו, ומה לב, זה שלשים ושתים נתיבות פליאות חכמה בו אף בכל נתיב מהן צורה שומרת דכתיב (בראשית ג' כד) לשמור את דרך עץ החיים:

the body, so Israel took 'the fruit of the beautiful tree (pri etz hadar)' [Leviticus 23:40]. As the palm tree (tamar) has its branches around it and its lulav in the middle, so Israel took the body of this tree, which is its heart. And corresponding to the body is the spinal cord in a person, which is the essence of the body. And [of] this lulav, 'lo lev (it has a heart)' is written, so too the heart is given to Him. And what is the heart? This is the thirty-two wondrous paths of wisdom (thirty-two netivot peliot chokhmah) that are in it; and in each path of them a form guards, as it is written (Genesis 3:24), 'to guard the way of the tree of life.'

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ומאי ניהו צורות, דכתיב (שם) וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הכרובים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת לשמור את דרך עץ החיים, ומאי וישכן מקדם לגן עדן, וישכן באותם הנתיבות שקדמו לאותו מקום הנקרא גן עדן ושקדם לכרובים דכתיב (שם) את הכרובים, ושקדם ללהט דכתיב

And what are the forms? As it is written (ibid.), 'and He placed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword, to guard the way of the tree of life.' And what is 'and He placed east of the garden of Eden'? He placed [them] in those paths that preceded that place called the garden of Eden, and that preceded the cherubim, as

it is written (ibid.), ‘the cherubim,’ and that preceded the flame, as it is written (ibid.), ‘and the flame of the whirling sword’, which preceded. But it is written that heaven, water, and fire preceded, as it is written (Genesis 1:6), ‘let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide between water and water,’ and it is written (ibid. 8), ‘and God called the firmament heaven’; and whence [do we know] that heaven is fire? As it is written (Deuteronomy 4:24), ‘for the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.‘

(שם) ואת להט החרב המתהפכת, שקדם, והכתיב שמים דמים ואש קדמו דכתיב (שם מו) יהי רקיע בתוך המים ויהי מבדיל בין מים למים, וכתיב (שם ח) ויקרא אלהים לרקיע שמים, ומנלן דשמים הוי אש דכתיב (דברים ד, כד) כי ה’ אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא אל קנא:

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And whence [do we know] that ‘heaven’ is the Holy One? As it is written (1 Kings 5:32 in the source; the verse is at 8:32), ‘and You shall hear [in] the heavens.’ Is it that Solomon prayed to the heavens, that they should hear their prayer? Rather, [to] the One whose name is called upon the heavens, as it is written (ibid. 27), ‘the heavens and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You’: behold, the name of the Holy One. And it is fire, and you said [it] preceded; rather say:

ומנלן דשמים הקדוש ברוך הוא, דכתיב (מ”א ה’ לב) ואתה תשמע השמים, אטו שלמה התפלל אל השמים שישמעו תפלתם, אלא אותו שנקרא שמו על השמים דכתיב (שם כ”ז) השמים ושמי השמים לא יכלכלוך, הרי שמו של הקב”ה והוי אש ואמרת קדם, אלא אימא כחם קדם של אותם צורות של המקום ההוא ואח”כ הצורות הקדושות ההם, ומאי ניהו כחם, כד”א (ש”א ב’ ב) אין קדוש

כה' כי אין בלתך ואין צור כאלהינו:

their power (kocham) preceded, of those forms of that place, and afterward those holy forms. And what is their power? As it is said (1 Samuel 2:2), 'there is none holy as the LORD, for there is none besides You, and there is no rock (tzur) like our God.'

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the offering as lifting God up; the Heart

'Let them take for Me an offering (terumah)' (Exodus 25:2) is read as 'lift Me up (harimu oti) in your prayers.' The worthy giver is the one 'drawn away from this world,' who 'knows My name.' And (Rabbi Rechumai) the righteous and pious 'lift Me up over all the world by their merits,' and 'from them the Heart

(lev) is nourished, and the Heart nourishes them.' Sod: prayer and the merit of the righteous raise and sustain 'the Heart', the divine center, the heart of the sefirotic order (Tiferet, and the Shekhinah below); a reciprocal nourishing between the tzaddikim and the grade above.

the lulav, the tree, and the thirty-two paths

The holy 'forms' are set over the nations, but Israel took 'the body of the tree and its heart.' As the heart is 'the beauty of the fruit of the body,' Israel took 'the fruit of the beautiful tree (pri etz hadar)' (Leviticus 23:40, the Four Species), the palm (tamar) with its branches around and its lulav within; and 'lo lev (it has a heart)' is heard in 'lulav.' The heart is 'the thirty-two wondrous paths of wisdom' (Sefer Yetzirah 1:1; cf. §§ 63, 92), in each of which 'a form guards, to guard the way of the tree of life' (Genesis 3:24). Sod: Israel holds the inner heart of the cosmic tree, the thirty-two paths, each watched by a guarding form.

the forms that guard the way

The 'forms' are the cherubim and 'the flame of the whirling sword' that God 'placed east of the garden of Eden to guard the way of the tree of life' (Genesis 3:24), placed in 'the paths that preceded' Eden, the cherubim, and the flame. A dispute over what 'preceded': heaven, water, and fire (Genesis 1:6-8), heaven

being fire (‘the LORD your God is a consuming fire,’ Deuteronomy 4:24). Sod: the guarding forms stand on the primordial paths, older than the garden; the elements and the firmament as the first structure. (The verbatim Hebrew’s chapter numeral for Genesis 1:6 is garbled in the source; the verse is ‘let there be a firmament,’ Genesis 1:6.)

heaven as the Name; the power that preceded

’Heaven’ is the Holy One: Solomon did not pray to the sky but to ‘the One whose name is called upon the heavens’ (‘the heavens cannot contain You,’ 1 Kings 8:27; cf. § 94). And though heaven is ‘fire’ and said to have ‘preceded,’ the resolution: not the forms themselves but ‘their power (kocham)’ preceded, ‘there is none holy as the LORD… and there is no rock (tzur) like our God’ (1 Samuel 2:2). Sod: the divine Name is what ‘heaven’ names; what precedes creation is the power, the ‘rock’ (tzur), of God, the ground of the forms. (The source cites this verse as 1 Kings 5:32; it is at 8:32, a he/chet scribal slip, flagged in the text.)

Editorial decisions

- **§99 and §100 citations.** § 99: the verbatim Hebrew’s chapter numeral for the ‘firmament’ verse is garbled; the verse is Genesis 1:6, rendered as the correct locus with a note.

§ 100: the source cites 1 Kings 5:32 for ‘and You shall hear the heavens,’ which is at 8:32 (a he/chet slip); rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 101-102; the three princes and the Tzaddik

The lulav read into the cosmic pillar. Three princes, Teli, Galgal, and Lev, each of twelve, together the thirty-six by which the world is sustained (§ 101); and the pillar from earth to firmament, named "Tzaddik," that grows strong with the righteous and bears the whole world, so that one righteous person sustains it, and the offering ascends first through him (§ 102).

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ישב ר׳ ברכיה ודרש מה לולב דאמרינן אלא ל״ו מסור לל״ב, והאיך, א״ל שלשה שרים הם תלי וגלגל ולב, וכל אחד ואחד י״ב, חזרו בשלשה מנין ל״ו שבהם נתקיים העולם דכתיב (משלי ג׳ כה) וצדיק יסוד עולם:

Rabbi Berakhiah sat and expounded: what is the lulav that we spoke of? Rather, thirty-six (lo, לו) are given over to thirty-two (lev, לב). And how? He said to him: there are three princes, Teli, and Galgal (the sphere), and Lev (the heart), and each and every one is twelve. They come, in three, to the number thirty-six, by which the world is sustained, as it is written (Proverbs 3:25 in the source; the verse is at 10:25), ‘and the righteous is the foundation of the world (tzaddik yesod olam).’

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תנא עמוד אחד מן הארץ לרקיע וצדיק שמו על שם הצדיקים, וכשיש צדיקים בעולם מתגבר ואם לאו מתחלש, והוא סובל כל העולם דכתיב (שם) צדיק יסוד עולם, ואם חלש לא יוכל להתקיים העולם, הלכך אפי׳ אין בעולם אלא צדיק אחד מעמיד העולם שנאמר וצדיק יסוד עולם לפיכך קחו תרומתי ממנו תחילה ואח״כ וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו

It was taught: a pillar [reaches] from the earth to the firmament, and ‘Tzaddik’ is its name, on account of the righteous; and when there are righteous in the world, it grows strong, and if not, it grows weak; and it bears the whole world, as it is written (ibid.), ‘the righteous is the foundation of the world.’ And if it grows weak, the world cannot endure. Therefore, even if there is in the world but one righteous person, he sustains the world, as it is said, ‘and

מאתם, מאת הנשאר, ומהו, זהב וכסף ונחשת:

the righteous is the foundation of the world.' Therefore, 'take My offering (terumah) from him first,' and afterward, 'and this is the offering which you shall take from them' (Exodus 25:3): from the remnant. And what is it? Gold and silver and bronze.

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An orientation

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the three princes and the number thirty-six

The lulav yields ‘thirty-six (lo, לו) given over to thirty-two (lev, לב)’: three princes, Teli, Galgal (the sphere), and Lev (the heart), each of twelve, together thirty-six, ‘by which the world is sustained’ (Proverbs 10:25). Sod: the three axes of the Sefer Yetzirah (6:1-3), the celestial Teli (the pole or cosmic dragon),

the Galgal (the sphere of the year), and the Lev (the heart, the soul), each ruling twelve, and the whole resting on the tzaddik, Yesod, the foundation.

the Tzaddik who bears the world

A pillar reaching 'from the earth to the firmament,' named 'Tzaddik' for the righteous: it strengthens when there are righteous below and weakens when there are none, and 'bears the whole world', 'even one righteous person sustains the world' (Proverbs 10:25). So the offering (terumah) is taken 'from him first,' then 'from the remnant' (Exodus 25:3), gold, silver, and bronze. Sod: Yesod, the tzaddik-grade, the pillar and channel on which the world stands, fed by the merit of the righteous; the offering ascends first through it.

Editorial decisions

- **§101 Proverbs citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites 'tzaddik yesod olam' as Proverbs 3:25, but it is at Proverbs 10:25 (a gimel/yod scribal slip, 3 for 10). Rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish; § 102's 'ibid.' points to the same.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 103-105; the tenth, the mother, and the seven days

The offering, the firstborn, and the festivals, read into the highest grades. The offering as the yod, the tenth (Malkhut), joined to the beginning (§ 103); the firstborn Israel, and “the mother of the world”, Binah, read from Proverbs 2:3 (§ 104); and the seven days the mother raised, Atzeret and its Torah, and Sukkot as the house built by wisdom (§ 105).

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ד"א ויקחו לי תרומה, ויקחו לקדש תרומה שהיא יו"ד והוא עשירי ומנלן דעשירי קדש דכתיב (ויקרא כ"ז לב) העשירי יהיה קדש לה', ומאי ניהו קדש, דכתיב (יחזקאל מ"ד ל) וראשית כל בכורי כל וכל תרומת כל וגו', וכתיב (תהלים קי"א י) ראשית חכמה יראת ה' אל תקרי יראת ה' אלא ויראת ה':

Another interpretation: 'and let them take for Me an offering (terumah)', take, to sanctify, an offering, which is the yod (י), and it is the tenth (asiri). And whence [do we know] that the tenth is holy? As it is written (Leviticus 27:32), 'the tenth shall be holy to the LORD.' And what is 'holy (kodesh)'? As it is written (Ezekiel 44:30), 'and the first of all the firstfruits of everything, and every offering of everything,' and so on. And it is written (Psalm 111:10), 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD', do not read 'the fear of the LORD (yirat H')' but 'and the fear of the LORD (ve-yirat H').'

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שאלו תלמידיו את ר' אליעזר רבינו מאי דכתיב (שמות י"ג ב) קדש לי כל בכור, וכי הוי הקב"ה בכור, א"ל אין קדש לי כל בכור אלא שני בקודש, ונקרא על שם ישראל דכתיב (שם ז' כב) בני בכורי ישראל, כביכול עמהם היה בשעת שעבוד, והיינו דכתיב (שמות ד' כז) שלח את בני

The students of Rabbi Eliezer our teacher asked him: what is written (Exodus 13:2), 'sanctify to Me every firstborn'? Is the Holy One [then] a firstborn? He said to them: 'sanctify to Me every firstborn' means only [that there are] two in holiness; and it is called by the name of Israel, as it is written (Exodus 7:22 in the source;

the verse is at 4:22), ‘Israel is My firstborn son.’ As it were, He was with them at the time of the enslavement; and this is what is written (Exodus 4:27 in the source; the verse is at 4:23), ‘send My son that he may serve Me,’ and not ‘My firstborn.’ Rabbi Rechumai said: what is written (Deuteronomy 22:7), ‘you shall surely send away the mother, and take the young for yourself’? And it did not say ‘you shall surely send away the father,’ but ‘you shall surely send away the mother,’ in honor of that one who is called ‘the mother of the world (em ha-olam),’ as it is said (Proverbs 2:3), ‘for you shall call understanding “mother” (ki im la-binah tikra).’

ויעבדני, ולא בכורי, אמר ר’ רחומאי מאי דכתיב (דברים כ”ב ז) שלח תשלח את האם ואת הבנים תקח לך, ולא אמר שלח תשלח את האב, אלא שלח תשלח את האם בכבוד אותה שנקראת אם העולם שנאמר (משלי ב’ ג) כי אם לבינה תקרא:

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And what is ‘and take the young for yourself’ (Deuteronomy, ibid.)? Rabbi Rechumai says: those children whom she raised. And what are they? The seven days of creation and the seven days of Sukkot, and that is the seven days of the week, which are seven. Is there [a distinction] among them, that some are more holy? As it is

ומאי ואת הבנים תקח לך (דברים שם), ר’ רחומאי אומר אותם בנים שגדלה, ומאי ניהו שבעת ימי בראשית ושבעת ימי הסוכות, והיינו שבעת ימי השבוע שהם שבעה, איכא בנייהו שהם יותר קודש דכתיב בהם (ויקרא כ”ג לז) מקראי קודש, והיינו א”כ עצרת

written of them (Leviticus 23:37), ‘holy convocations (mikra’ei kodesh).’ And so, then, is Atzeret, which is a ‘holy convocation’ (ibid. 36)? He said to him: yes; but this is one and that is two, as it is written (ibid. 35), ‘on the first day a holy convocation’ and ‘on the seventh day a holy convocation.’ He said to him: why is Atzeret one? Because on it the Torah was given to Israel; and when the Torah was created, ‘the beginning’: the Holy One ruled in His world with it alone, as it is written (Psalm 111:10), ‘the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD.’ He said: since it is so, your holiness shall be yours alone. And what is Sukkot? He said to him: the bet (the house), as it is written (Proverbs 24:3), ‘with wisdom a house is built.’ And whence [do we know] that Sukkot is a house? As it is written (Genesis 33:17), ‘and Jacob journeyed to Sukkot and built himself a house… therefore he called the name of the place Sukkot.’

דהוא מקרא קודש (שם ל"ו), א"ל אין, אבל זה אחד וזה שנים דכתיב (שם לה) ביום הראשון מקרא קודש וביום השביעי מקרא קודש, אמר ליה מאי טעמא הוי עצרת אחד, מפני שבו ניתנה תורה לישראל וכשנבראת התורה ראשית היה הקב"ה שליט בעולמו עמה יחידי דכתיב (תהלים קי"א י) ראשית חכמה יראת ה', אמר הואיל וכן קדושתך תהיה לך לבדך, ומאי ניהו סוכות, א"ל בי"ת, דכתיב (משלי כ"ד ג) בחכמה יבנה בית, ומנלן דסוכות הוי בית דכתיב (בראשית ל"ג יז) ויעקב נסע סכותה ויבן לו בית ולמקנהו עשה סוכות על כן קרא שם המקום סוכות:

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the offering, the yod, and the tenth

The offering (terumah) is ‘the yod (י),’ ‘the tenth (asiri)’, and ‘the tenth shall be holy’ (Leviticus 27:32). The ‘holy’ is the firstfruits and every offering (Ezekiel 44:30); and ‘the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD’ (Psalm 111:10) is read ‘AND the fear of the LORD (ve-yirat).’ Sod: the yod, the tenth grade, Malkhut, the tenth sefirah, is the sanctified ‘tenth,’ the holy offering; and ‘the fear of the LORD,’ Malkhut, is joined (‘and’) to ‘the beginning,’ Ḥokhmah.

the firstborn and the mother of the world

’Sanctify to Me every firstborn’ (Exodus 13:2) does not make God a firstborn but marks ‘two in holiness,’ Israel being ‘My firstborn son’ (Exodus 4:22), God as it were sharing their bondage (‘send My son,’ Exodus 4:23, not ‘My firstborn’). And Deuteronomy 22:7, ‘send away the mother,’ not the father, honors ‘the mother of the world (em ha-olam)’: Proverbs 2:3, ‘ki im la-binah tikra,’ is read with ‘im’ (‘if’) heard as ‘em’ (‘mother’), ‘you call Binah ‘mother.” Sod: Binah, the supernal mother (the

throne and 'sea' of § 96), is the mother of the world; and the reciprocity of God and Israel as 'firstborn.'

the seven days, Atzeret, and Sukkot

'Take the young' (Deuteronomy 22:7) is the children the mother raised, the seven days of creation and of Sukkot, the seven of the week, 'holy convocations' (Leviticus 23:37). Among them Atzeret is 'one' while the festival is 'two' (the first and seventh days, Leviticus 23:35), for on Atzeret the Torah was given, and the Torah, 'the beginning', was God's sole companion in ruling ('the beginning of wisdom,' Psalm 111:10): 'your holiness shall be yours alone.' And Sukkot is the 'house', 'with wisdom a house is built' (Proverbs 24:3; cf. § 55), for 'Jacob journeyed to Sukkot and built himself a house' (Genesis 33:17). Sod: the seven days as the seven lower grades, the children of Binah; the Torah as the singular grade; Sukkot as the 'house,' the Shekhinah or the world, built by Ḥokhmah.

Editorial decisions

- **§104 citations.** Two scribal slips in the verbatim Hebrew: 'Israel is My firstborn son' cited as Exodus 7:22 (verse at 4:22, a dalet/zayin slip), and 'send My son' cited as Exodus 4:27 (verse at 4:23, a gimel/zayin slip). Both rendered as the source gives them with the correct locus flagged inline.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 106-108; the princes, the Name, and the three angels

The heart of the book's Name-mysticism. The three cosmic princes explained, Teli the likeness, Galgal the belly, Lev the heart holding the thirty-two paths (§ 106); the priestly blessing as the twelve-letter Name, three "armies" of twenty-four making the seventy-two names from Exodus 14 (§ 107); and the three princes over the holy forms, Gabriel on the left, Michael on the right, Uriel in the middle, gathered into "the Oneness of our God" by the sacrifice (§ 108).

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ישב ר' ברכיה ודרש מאי תלי, זה דמות שיש לפני הקב"ה דכתיב (שה"ש ה' י"א) קווצותיו תלתלים, מאי גלגל, זה בטן, ומאי לב, דכתיב (דברים ד' י"א) עד לב השמים, ובו כלולים ל"ב נתיבות פליאות חכמה:

Rabbi Berakhiah sat and expounded: what is Teli? This is the likeness (demut) that is before the Holy One, as it is written (Song of Songs 5:11), 'his locks are curled (kevutzotav taltalim).' What is Galgal (the sphere)? This is the belly. And what is Lev (the heart)? As it is written (Deuteronomy 4:11), 'unto the heart of heaven (lev ha-shamayim).' And in it are included the thirty-two wondrous paths of wisdom (netivot peliot chokhmah).

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מאי דכתיב (במדבר ו' כח) יברכך ה' וישמרך, יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחנך, ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום, זה שמו של הקב"ה המפורש, והוא שם בן שתים עשרה אותיות דכתיב הוי"ה הוי"ה הוי"ה מלמד ששמותיו של הקב"ה שלשה חיילים, וכל חיל וחיל דומה לחבירו, ושמו כשמו, וכולם חתומים ביו"ד ה"א ו"ו ה"א, והאיך תצרף יו"ד ה"א ו"ו

What is written (Numbers 6:24-26), 'may the LORD bless you and keep you; may the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the LORD lift up His face upon you and grant you peace'? This is the explicit Name of the Holy One (Shem ha-Meforash), and it is the Name of twelve letters, as it is written yod-heh-vav-heh, yod-heh-vav-heh, yod-heh-vav-heh, teaching that the

ה"א כ"ד פעמים והיינו חיל אחד יברכך ה', וגם השני יאר ה' והם כ"ד שמותיו של הקב"ה, וגם השלישי ישא ה' והם כ"ד שמותיו של הקב"ה, מלמד שכל חיל ראשיהם ושריהם הם כ"ד, תצרף כ"ד שלשה פעמים ויהיו ע"ב שמותיו של הקב"ה, והיינו ע"ב היוצאים מן (שמות יד יט-כא) ויסע ויבא ויט:

names of the Holy One are three armies (chayalim), and each and every army resembles its fellow, and its name is like [the other's] name, and all of them are sealed with yod-heh-vav-heh. And how? Combine yod-heh-vav-heh twenty-four times, and that is one army, 'may the LORD bless you'; and also the second, 'may the LORD make shine,' and they are the twenty-four names of the Holy One; and also the third, 'may the LORD lift up,' and they are the twenty-four names of the Holy One. This teaches that each army, their heads and their princes: are twenty-four. Combine twenty-four three times, and they will be the seventy-two names of the Holy One. And that is the seventy-two that come out from (Exodus 14:19-21), 'and [the angel] journeyed (va-yisa),' 'and it came (va-yavo),' 'and he stretched out (va-yet).'

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ומי הם אלה השרים, מלמד ששלשה הם, שהגבורה שר על כל הצורות הקדושות מצד שמאל של הקב"ה והוא גבריאל, ומימיני

And who are these princes? It teaches that they are three: for Gevurah is prince over all the holy forms, from the left side of the Holy One, and it is Gabriel; and

שר על כל הצורות הקדושות והוא מיכאל, ובאמצע הוא האמת והוא אוריאל שר על כל הצורות הקדושות, וכל שר כ"ד צורות ואין חקר לגדודיו דכתיב (איוב כ"ה ג) היש מספר לגדודיו, אם כן הרי ע"ב וע"ב, א"ל לא, דבשעה שישראל מקריביו קרבן לפני אביהם שבשמים מתיחדים יחד והיינו יחידו של אלהינו:

from the right, a prince over all the holy forms, and it is Michael; and in the middle is Truth (Emet), and it is Uriel, prince over all the holy forms. And each prince has twenty-four forms, and there is no searching out His troops, as it is written (Job 25:3), 'is there a number to His troops?' If so, then that is seventy-two and seventy-two! He said to him: no; for at the time when Israel offer a sacrifice before their Father in heaven, they unite together, and that is the Oneness of our God (yichudo shel Eloheinu).

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the three princes explained

Teli is 'the likeness before the Holy One', the celestial figure of 'his locks curled (taltalim)' (Song of Songs 5:11), the axis or dragon of the heavens; Galgal (the sphere) is the belly; and Lev (the heart) is 'the heart of heaven' (Deuteronomy 4:11), holding 'the thirty-two wondrous paths of wisdom.' Sod: the three axes of the Sefer Yetzirah (6:1-3), Teli, the sphere, and the heart, the last the seat of the thirty-two paths (cf. §§ 98, 101).

the priestly blessing and the seventy-two-fold Name

The priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26), with its three 'LORDs (YHVH),' is 'the explicit Name (Shem ha-Meforash),' a Name of twelve letters (three times the four-lettered YHVH); its three clauses are three 'armies,' each of twenty-four names sealed with YHVH, twenty-four times three, the seventy-two names, 'the seventy-two that come out from' the three verses 'va-yisa, va-yavo, va-yet' (Exodus 14:19-21). Sod: the seventy-two-letter Name (the Shem ha-Meforash of § 95, constructed in § 110), heard here out of the blessing's threefold structure. (The verbatim Hebrew cites the blessing as Numbers 6:28, an impossible locus; the blessing is at 6:24-26.)

Michael, Gabriel, and Uriel

The three princes over the holy forms: Gabriel on the left (Gevurah, severity), Michael on the right (Ḥesed, mercy), and Uriel in the middle (Emet, Truth, Tiferet), each with twenty-four forms, and beyond counting ('is there a number to His troops?' Job 25:3). Not 'seventy-two and seventy-two,' for when Israel offer a sacrifice the forms 'unite together', 'the Oneness of our God.' Sod: the right, left, and center of the divine (Ḥesed, Gevurah, Tiferet), figured as Michael, Gabriel, and Uriel (cf. Michael and Gabriel, §§ 11-12); the seventy-two-fold multiplicity gathered into the One by the offering.

Editorial decisions

- **§107 Numbers citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites the priestly blessing as Numbers 6:28, an impossible locus (Numbers 6 has 27 verses); the blessing is at 6:24-26 (a chet/dalet slip, 28 for 24). Rendered the correct locus with a note, since the invalid numeral cannot be reproduced as a chapter:verse.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 109-110; the sacrifice and the seventy-two-letter Name

The capstone of the Name-section. The sacrifice as "bringing near", the forms united, the spirit descending into them (§ 109); and then the full construction of the seventy-two-letter Name from the three verses of Exodus 14 (first forward, second reversed, third forward), three letters per name, deployed to the four directions and sealed with the divine titles (§ 110).

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ואמאי אקרי קרבן, אלא מפני שמקרב הצורות הכחות הקדושות כדכתיב (יחזקאל ל"ז י"ז) וקרב אותם אחד אל אחד לך לעץ אחד והיו לאחדים בידך, ואמר לריח ניחוח, ואין ריח אלא באף, ואין נשימה שהיא הריח אלא באף, ואין ניחוח אלא ירידה דכתיב (ויקרא ט' כ"ב) וירד ומתגרמינן ונחית, והרוח יורד ומתייחד בצורות הקדושות ההם ומתקרב ע"י הקרבן, והיינו דאקרי קרבן:

And why is it called a sacrifice (korban)? Rather, because it brings near (mekarev) the holy forms and powers, as it is written (Ezekiel 37:17), 'and bring them near, one to another, into one tree, and they shall become one in your hand.' And [it says] 'for a pleasing aroma (rei'ach nichoach)', and there is no smell (rei'ach) except in the nose, and no breath, which is the smell, except in the nose; and 'nichoach' is nothing but descent (yeridah), as it is written (Leviticus 9:22), 'and he descended (va-yered),' which we render [in Aramaic] 'u-nachit'; and the spirit (ruach) descends and unites in those holy forms, and is brought near by the sacrifice; and that is why it is called a sacrifice (korban).

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השם היוצא מן השלשה פסוקים ויסע ויבא ויט (שמות יד יט כא) אותיות הפסוק הראשון של ויסע כסדר הפסוק נסדרות בשם, ואותיות הפסוק השני בהיפך הפסוק נסדרות בשם, ואותיות הפסוק השלישי שהוא ויט כסדר

The Name that comes out from the three verses 'va-yisa, va-yavo, va-yet' (Exodus 14:19-21): the letters of the first verse, of 'va-yisa,' are arranged in the Name in the order of the verse; and the letters of the second verse are arranged in the Name in the reverse of the verse;

and the letters of the third verse, which is ‘va-yet,’ are arranged in the Name in the order of the verse, like the first, which is ‘va-yisa.’ And in each and every one of the verses [there are] seventy-two letters. It is found that in each and every name of the seventy-two names that come out from these three verses, which are ‘va-yisa, va-yavo, va-yet’, [there are] three letters. These are the seventy-two names, and they are divided into three parts, twenty-four to each part; and over each part of the three parts is a high prince set over them; and each part has four directions to guard, east and west, north and south, and they are divided, six to each direction. It is found that for the four directions [there are] twenty-four forms; and so for the second, and so for the third. And all of them are sealed with ‘YHVH, God of Israel, living God, Shaddai, high and exalted, dwelling forever on high, and holy is His name; YHVH: blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.’

הפסוק נסדרות בשם כמו הראשון שהוא ויסע, ובכל אחד ואחד מהפסוקים ע”ב אותיות, נמצא שבכל שם ושם מע”ב שמות היוצאים מאלו השלשה פסוקים שהם ויסע ויבא ויט שלשה אותיות, אלה הם ע”ב שמות היוצאים ומתחלקים לג’ חלקים כ”ד לכל חלק, ועל כל חלק מג’ חלקים שר גבוה עליהם, ועל כל חלק יש לו ד’ רוחות לשמור מזרח ומערב צפון ודרום ומתחלקים ששה לכל רוח, נמצא לד’ רוחות כ”ד צורות, וכן לשני וכן לשלישי, וכולם חתומים בהוי”ה אלהי ישראל אלהים חיים שדי רם ונשא שוכן עד מרום וקדוש שמו הוי”ה בשכמל”ו:

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the sacrifice that brings near

The sacrifice (korban) is so called because it 'brings near (mekarev)' the holy forms and powers, 'bring them near, one to another, into one tree, and they shall become one' (Ezekiel 37:17, the two sticks joined). 'A pleasing aroma (rei'ach nichoach)': the smell (rei'ach) is in the nose; and 'nichoach' is heard as 'descent (yeridah)', 'va-yered' (Leviticus 9:22), rendered 'u-nachit' in the Aramaic, so the spirit (ruach) descends, unites in the holy forms, and is 'brought near' by the offering. Sod: the sacrifice below effects the union and the descent of the divine flow (ruach) into the forms and grades, the theurgy of 'drawing near.'

the construction of the seventy-two-letter Name

The Shem ha-Meforash, the seventy-two-fold Name, is built from the three verses of Exodus 14:19-21, each of exactly

seventy-two letters: the first verse (va-yisa) taken in order, the second (va-yavo) in reverse, the third (va-yet) in order, read as seventy-two three-letter names. The seventy-two are divided into three parts of twenty-four, each under a high prince, and each part deployed to the four directions (east, west, north, south), six to a direction, twenty-four forms to the four winds. All are sealed with the divine titles: 'YHVH, God of Israel, living God, Shaddai, high and exalted, dwelling forever, holy is His name.' Sod: the classic derivation of the seventy-two-letter Name (cf. §§ 94, 95, 107); the Name deployed over the whole created order, the four directions and the grades, and sealed by the Godhead.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 111-112; the twelve-letter Name and the twelve names

The Name that lifts its keeper. “The LORD reigns, reigned, will reign” heard as the Explicit Name one may combine and pronounce, the twelve-letter Name of the priestly blessing, written on Aaron’s forehead, handed through the angel Masmariah to Elijah on Carmel, “by which he was exalted and did not taste death” (§ 111); and the twelve precious Names of the tribes, a series of untranslatable angelic Names, “the springs of wisdom” (§ 112).

A provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim (§ 112’s twelve tribal Names are nomina barbara, transliterated; their segmentation is manuscript-uncertain); the standard modern English translation (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright.



ישב ר' אהילאי ודרש מאי דכתיב ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד, אלא זהו השם המפורש שניתן בו רשות לצרף ולהזכיר דכתיב (במדבר ו' כ"ז) ושמו את שמי על בני ישראל ואני אברכם, והוא שם בן י"ב אותיות בשם של ברכת כהנים יברכך ה' וגו' שהם שלשה והם שתים עשרה, ונקודו כן יפעל יפועל יפעול, וכל השומרו ומזכירו בקדושה ובטהרה מתקבלים כל תפלותיו, ולא עוד אלא שהוא אהוב למטה ואהוב למעלה, נחמד למטה ונחמד למעלה ונענה ונעזר מיד, זה השם המפורש הנכתב על מצח אהרן, ובשם המפורש מע"ב אותיות, ובשם המפורש שהוא י"ב שמות שמסר הקב"ה למסמריה העומד לפני הפרגוד, והוא מסרם לאליהו בהר הכרמל ובהם נתעלה ולא טעים טעם מיתה:

Rabbi Ahilai sat and expounded: what is written, 'the LORD reigns, the LORD reigned, the LORD will reign forever and ever'? Rather, this is the Explicit Name (Shem ha-Meforash), in which permission was given to combine and to pronounce, as it is written (Numbers 6:27), 'and they shall set My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.' And it is the Name of twelve letters, within the Name of the priestly blessing, 'may the LORD bless you,' and so on, which are three, and they are twelve. And its vocalization is thus: yif'al, yif'ol, yif'ul. And everyone who keeps it and mentions it in holiness and in purity, all his prayers are accepted; and moreover, he is beloved below and beloved above, cherished below and cherished above, and answered and helped at once. This is the Explicit Name written upon the forehead of Aaron. And [there is] the Explicit Name of seventy-two letters; and the Explicit Name that is twelve names, which the Holy One handed to Masmariah, who stands before the curtain (pargod), and he handed them to Elijah on Mount Carmel, and by them he was exalted and did not taste the taste of death.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ואלו הן השמות המפורשות
היקרות והמפוארות שהם שתים
עשרה לשנים עשר שבטי ישראל
אהציצה"רון אכליתה"רון
שמקת"רון דמושה"רון
וצפצפסית"רון הורמי"רון
ברחיה"רון ער"ש גדר"און
בסאו"ה מנא"הון חז"הויה
הוהי"רי הא"ה אהי"ה
והראית"הון. וכולם נכללים בל"ב
השמים ומתחלקין לכ"ד שמות,
ובהם כלול זכר ונקבה ופקודים
בתלי וגלגל ולב, והם מעיינות
החכמה:

And these are the Explicit Names, the precious and the glorious, which are twelve, for the twelve tribes of Israel: Ahatzitzahron, Akhlitahron, Shemakteron, Demushahron, ve-Tzaftzafsitahron, Hurmiron, Berachyahron, Ersh Gadraon, Basaoh, Manahon, Chazhoyah, Hohiri, Hah, Ehyeh, ve-Hareithon. And they are all included in the thirty-two of heaven, and are divided into twenty-four names; and in them are included male and female and the numbered ones (pekudim), in Teli and Galgal and Lev; and they are the springs of wisdom (ma'ayanei ha-chokhmah).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



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An orientation

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the twelve-letter Name, Aaron, and Elijah

The threefold ‘the LORD reigns / reigned / will reign’ is heard as the Explicit Name (Shem ha-Meforash) that may be ‘combined and pronounced’ (Numbers 6:27, ‘they shall set My name upon Israel’), the Name of twelve letters latent in the priestly blessing (three clauses, each with the four-letter YHVH). Its keeper is ‘beloved above and below,’ his prayers answered; it was written on Aaron’s forehead. And there is the Name of seventy-two letters (§§ 95, 110), and the Name of twelve names handed to the angel Masmariah ‘before the curtain (pargod)’ and by him to Elijah on Carmel, by which Elijah ‘was exalted and did not taste death’ (2 Kings 2). Sod: the ascending Names, twelve-letter, twelve-name, seventy-two-letter, and the theurgy of the Name that lifts its keeper.

the twelve Names of the tribes

A series of nomina barbara, untranslatable, apparently angelic, Names, most ending in the theophoric ‘-ron’, given for the twelve tribes and reproduced verbatim in the Hebrew; the

English transliterates them. The text calls them ‘twelve’ (for the twelve tribes), but their exact segmentation into twelve is uncertain and varies across the manuscripts, so the transliterated sequence follows the source’s letters without forcing a twelvefold division. They are ‘included in the thirty-two of heaven,’ divide into twenty-four, hold ‘male and female,’ and are ‘the springs of wisdom’, tied to the three cosmic princes Teli, Galgal, and Lev (§§ 101, 106).

Editorial decisions

- **§112 nomina barbara.** The twelve tribal Names are nomina barbara (untranslatable magical/angelic names). Reproduced verbatim in the Hebrew original; transliterated in the English following the source’s letters and gershayim-segmentation. The count ‘twelve’ is the text’s; the manuscript segmentation is uncertain, so no artificial twelvefold division was imposed. Flagged in the apparatus.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 113-116; the tribes as channels and the point as soul

The channels of the flow, and the point that is the soul of the letters. The twelve tribes as the twelve pipes of a spring, filled by merit (§ 113); the "tribe" as a simple line, and the circle that runs within the square (§ 114); the vowel-point as the round soul the letters cannot live or be spoken without (§ 115); and the point descending through the channels by the sacrifice's smell into the unity of the Shema (§ 116).

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ישב ר׳ רחומאי ודרש מאי י״ב שבטי ישראל, אלא מלמד שי״ב שבטים יש לו להקב״ה, ומאי ניהו, מלה״ד למלך שהיה לו מעין נאה ולכל אחיו אין להם מים אחרים אלא מאותו המעיין, ואינן יכולין לסבול צמא, מה עשה, עשה למעיין י״ב צנורות וקראם על שמות בני אחיו, ואמר אם יהיו הבנים טובים כאבותם יזכו ואמלא הצנורות, ירוו אבותם וישתו בניהם אחריהם ואם לא יזכו הבנים ולא יעשו דברים הגונים לפני הרי צנורות עומדות על ענין זה אתן להם מים על מנת שלא יתנו לבניהם דבר אחרי שאינם עושים רצוני:

Rabbi Rechumai sat and expounded: what are the twelve tribes of Israel? Rather, it teaches that the Holy One has twelve tribes. And what are they? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a fair spring, and all his brothers had no other water except from that spring, and they could not bear the thirst. What did he do? He made for the spring twelve pipes (tzinorot), and called them by the names of his brothers' sons. And he said: if the sons are as good as their fathers, they will merit, and I will fill the pipes, [so that] their fathers are watered and their sons drink after them; and if the sons do not merit and do not do fitting things before me, behold, the pipes stand for this purpose: I will give them water on condition that they give nothing to their sons, since they do not do my will.

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ומאי לישנא דשבט, דבר פשוט הוא שאינו מרובע, מ״ט, דלית אפשר מרובע בגו מרובע אחר,

And what is the term 'tribe (shevet)'? A simple thing (davar pashut) that is not squared. Why? Because it is not possible [to have]

אלא עיגולה בגו ריבועא רהטי,
ואי מרובע בגו ריבועא לא רהטי:

a square within another square; rather, a circle within a square runs [fits]; but a square within a square does not run.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי ניהו עיגולא, הדין נקודה
דאורייתא דמשה דאינהו כולהו
עיגולא ודמיין באתוותא כנשמתא
דחיי בגופיה דאינש דלית אפשר
ליה למיתי כל היכא דלית קיימא
בגויה, ולא למנקט מימרא זוטרא
ורבתא בלא נשמתא כוותיה דהדין
נקודה דלית אפשר למלתא זוטרא
או רבתא לאתאמרה בלא נקודה:

And what is the circle (igula)? This is the point (nekudah) of the Torah of Moses, which are all circle, and resemble, among the letters, the soul of life in the body of a person, which cannot come [to be] anywhere it does not stand within, and one cannot take a small or great utterance without a soul like it; [so is] this point, without which it is not possible for a word, small or great, to be uttered without a point.

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וכל נקודה עיגולא, וכל אתיא
רבועא, ומתקיימא אתיא בנקודה
ואינון חייהון, והדין נקודה אתיא

And every point is a circle, and every letter (ot) is a square; and the letter is sustained by the point, and they [the points] are their [the

דרך הצינורות להדין אתיא על ידי ריח הקרבן ומיד יורד דכתיב (ויקרא א' ט) ריח ניחוח לה', שיורד לה', היינו דכתיב (דברים ו' ד) שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד:

letters'] life. And this point comes through the channels (tzinorot) to this letter by way of the smell (rei'ach) of the sacrifice, and immediately it descends, as it is written (Leviticus 1:9), 'a pleasing aroma to the LORD', that it descends to the LORD; this is what is written (Deuteronomy 6:4), 'Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'

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the twelve tribes as channels

The twelve tribes are the twelve ‘pipes (tzinorot)’ of a spring, named for the king’s nephews: the water reaches the fathers and, if the sons merit, the sons after them; if not, the channels are shut to the sons. Sod: the twelve conduits of the flow (the shefa) through which grace descends from the source, Binah, the

spring and 'sea' (§ 96), to the world, gated by merit; the twelve channels below the sefirot (cf. the gimel-channel, §§ 17-20, and the window of § 54).

the tribe as the simple line

'Tribe (shevet)', also 'staff, rod', is 'a simple thing (davar pashut),' not squared, because 'a square within a square does not run (fit), but a circle within a square runs.' Sod: the straight line (the channel, the staff) against the square (the vessel); and the circle that moves within the square, the geometry of the point (circle) within the letter (square), unfolded next.

the point as the soul of the letters

The 'circle' is the point (nekudah), the vowel-points of 'the Torah of Moses,' which are all round, and it stands to the letters as 'the soul of life' stands to the body: nothing exists or is uttered without it, as no word, small or great, can be spoken without a vowel-point. Sod: the vowel-points as the animating soul, the flow, within the consonantal letters (the vessels); the point is the life the letter-body holds.

the point, the channels, and the Shema

Every point is a circle, every letter a square; the letter is 'sustained by the point,' which is 'their life.' The point reaches

the letter ‘through the channels (tzinorot), by the smell of the sacrifice,’ and ‘immediately descends’, ‘a pleasing aroma to the LORD’ (Leviticus 1:9), that it descends to the LORD, and this is ‘Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one’ (Deuteronomy 6:4). Sod: the sacrifice draws the animating point (the flow) down through the channels into the letters, and the descent culminates in the unification of the divine Name, the Shema (cf. the korban that ‘brings near,’ § 109).

Sefer ha-Bahir § 117; the LORD is a man of war

A martial verse read into the highest grade. “The LORD is a man of war” rendered by the Targum as “master of the victory of battles”, so “man” is a sign, not literal; and “master” leads to the alef, the palace of holiness (heikhal ha-kodesh), the primal letter of thought in which the divine Name dwells (cf. §§ 68-70).

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אמר רבי יוחנן מאי דכתיב (שמות ט”ו ג) ה’ איש מלחמה ה’ שמו,

Rabbi Yochanan said: what is written (Exodus 15:3), ‘the LORD is a man of war, the LORD is His

אלא איש הוי סימן כדמתרגמינן ה׳ איש מלחמה ה׳ מארי נצחן קרבייא, ומאי ניהו מארי, אל״ף ראשונה היכלא קדישא, היכלא קדישא סלקא דעתך, אלא אימא היכל הקדש:

name’? Rather, ‘man (ish)’ is a sign, as we render [in the Targum], ‘the LORD is a man of war’, ‘the LORD, master of the victory of battles (mari nitzchan kravaya).’ And what is ‘master (mari)’? The first alef is the holy palace (heikhala kadisha). ‘The holy palace’, does that enter your mind? Rather say: the palace of holiness (heikhal ha-kodesh).

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the man of war and the palace of holiness

Exodus 15:3, ‘the LORD is a man of war,’ is read through the Targum (Onkelos), which renders it ‘the LORD, master of the victory of battles (mari nitzchan kravaya)’, so ‘man (ish)’ is ‘a sign,’ not literal. And ‘master (mari)’ leads to ‘the first alef,’ which is ‘the palace of holiness (heikhal ha-kodesh)’, the

Aramaic ‘holy palace (heikhala kadisha)’ refined to the precise Hebrew term. Sod: the alef, the primal letter of thought (machashavah), is the palace of holiness in which the divine Name dwells (cf. the alef, thought, and ‘heikhal ha-kodesh’ of section 70); the ‘man of war’ is the Name housed in that supernal palace.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 118-119; the cosmic tree

The Bahir's most famous passage, and the first time in Kabbalistic literature that the divine powers are drawn as a tree. The "powers of the Holy One" stand one upon another and resemble a tree watered by Wisdom; the souls of the righteous fly from the spring to the great channel and cleave to it. Every later picture of the sefirotic tree grows from these two sections.

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יו"ד, בעשרה מאמרות שנברא בהן העולם, ומאי ניהו היינו תורת	Yod, in the ten utterances (ma'amarot) by which the world was created. And what is it? It is

אמת שכוללת כל העולמים, ושי"ן מאי הוי, א"ל שרש האילן, דשי"ן הוי כעין שרש האילן:

the Torah of truth that comprises all the worlds. And the shin, what is it? He said to him: the root of the tree, for the shin is like the root of the tree.

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ומאי הוי אילן דאמרת, א"ל כוחותיו של הקב"ה זה על גב זה, והן דומין לאילן, מה אילן זה על ידי המים מוציא פירות אף הקב"ה על ידי המים מרבה כחות האילן, ומאי ניהו מים של הקב"ה, היינו חכמה, והיינו נשמות הצדיקים שפורחין מן המעיין אל הצנור הגדול ועולה ודבק באילן, ועל ידי מה פורח, על ידי ישראל, כשהם

And what is this 'tree' you spoke of? He said to him: the powers of the Holy One are one upon another, and they resemble a tree. Just as this tree brings forth fruit by means of water, so too the Holy One, by means of water, multiplies the powers of the tree. And what is the water of the Holy One? It is Wisdom (Ḥokhmah). And it is the souls of the righteous, who fly from the spring to the great

channel, and rise and cleave to the tree. And by means of what do they fly? By means of Israel: when they are righteous and good, the Shekhinah dwells among them and dwells in their deeds, in the bosom of the Holy One, and He makes them fruitful and multiplies them.

צדיקים וטובים שכינה שרויה ביניהם ושרויה במעשיהם בחיקו של הקב"ה ומפרה אותם ומרבה אותם:

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yod and shin (the letters)

Remez performed through the letter-forms. The yod (numerical value ten) is read as the ‘ten utterances’ (asarah ma’amarot, m. Avot 5:1) by which the world was created and as the Torah that comprises all worlds; the shin, whose three upward strokes branch from a single base, is ‘the root of the tree’, the letter-

shape figuring the root-system from which the cosmic tree grows. Letter-mysticism (remez/sod), surfaced in apparatus, not the body.

the powers resemble a tree

Sod: 'the powers of the Holy One, one upon another, resembling a tree' is the Bahir's most famous image and the earliest figure of the Tree of the sefirot in Kabbalistic literature. The word sefirot is not yet used; the body keeps the source's 'powers' (kohot), and the sefirotic identification is surfaced here rather than substituted into the rendering, per the frame's discretion. *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

the water is Wisdom and the souls of the righteous

The 'water of the Holy One' that multiplies the tree is identified first with Hokhmah (Wisdom, the second sefirah) and then with the souls of the righteous, a dense sod identification in which the irrigating Wisdom and the ascending souls are one flow. The souls 'fly from the spring (ma'ayan) to the great channel (tzinor ha-gadol)': the proto-shefa hydraulics of spring, channel, and tree, the same overflow figured in Bahir SS4-6 and SS17-20.

the Shekhinah dwells among them

Sod: the Shekhinah dwells among Israel only ‘when they are righteous and good,’ and dwells ‘in their deeds.’ The indwelling presence is here made to depend on human conduct, the theurgic loop by which the lower sustains the flow above, makes the tree fruitful, and ‘multiplies’ it.

A number-shift in the Hebrew (reconciliation finding)

The Hebrew shifts number where the souls ascend: they “fly” (*porḥin*, plural), but then “rises and cleaves” (*oleh ve-davek*, singular) and “flies” (*poreaḥ*, singular). The rendering above smooths the sequence to plural. The singular may be distributive (“each soul rises”) or may refer back to the water / Wisdom (singular) ascending to the channel. This is a live reading-decision, not an error; it is flagged here pending an editor’s call.

Manuscript variants

- **Wikisource / Sefaria base text**: מרבה כחות חאילן (read as כחות האילן, ‘the powers of the tree’), Apparent orthographic/scribal variant (chet for he); reproduced verbatim and read as ha-ilan.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 120; the Shekhinah is called Tzedek

The companion to §75: a short prooftext chain answering how we know the Shekhinah is called Tzedek. “The skies pour down tzedek” is joined to “tzedek lodges in her,” and the grade is tied to David’s kingship and to Zion, so Tzedek names the lowest sefirah, Malkhut, the seat of judgment and of the kingdom.

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ומנלן דשכינה אקרית צדק דכתיב (דברים ל”ג כ”ו) רוכב שמים	And how do we know that the Shekhinah is called Tzedek? As it is written (Deuteronomy 33:26),

בעזרך ובגאותו שחקים, וכתיב (ישעי' מ"ה ח) ושחקים יזלו צדק, וצדק זהו שכינה דכתיב (שם א' כא) צדק ילין בה, וצדק נתן לדוד דכתיב (תהלים קמ"ו י) ימלוך ה' לעולם אלהיך ציון לדור ודור, וכתיב (דהי"א י"א א') ציון היא עיר דוד:

'who rides the heavens in your help, and in His majesty the skies (sheḥakim)'; and it is written (Isaiah 45:8), 'and let the skies pour down tzedek', and tzedek, this is the Shekhinah, as it is written (Isaiah 1:21), 'tzedek lodges in her.' And tzedek was given to David, as it is written (Psalm 146:10), 'the LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, for generation after generation'; and it is written (1 Chronicles 11:1), 'Zion is the city of David.'

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the Shekhinah is called Tzedek

Derash: a prooftext chain establishing Tzedek as a name of the Shekhinah. ‘The skies pour down tzedek’ (Isaiah 45:8) is joined

to ‘tzedek lodges in her’ (Isaiah 1:21): the feminine ‘in her’ (bah) read as the indwelling presence. This continues Bahir §75, where the two tzedeks are unfolded. Sod: Tzedek is the name of the lowest grade, later Malkhut, in her aspect as judgment and as the seat of kingship.

tzedek was given to David / Zion is the city of David

The chain then ties Tzedek to David’s kingship: ‘the LORD shall reign… O Zion’ (Psalm 146:10) and ‘Zion is the city of David.’ Zion and the Davidic throne are read as the earthly correlate of the Shekhinah-Tzedek grade (Malkhut), the point where the kingdom above meets the kingdom below.

citation of ‘Zion is the city of David’

Fidelity note: the source cites ‘Zion is the city of David’ as 1 Chronicles 11:1; the verse is in fact at 1 Chronicles 11:5 (‘David captured the stronghold of Zion, which is the city of David’; cf. 2 Samuel 5:7). The reference is rendered here as the source gives it, with the discrepancy flagged rather than silently normalized.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 121-122; the generations and the garments

One of the most consequential passages in the book: the earliest clear Kabbalistic statement of the transmigration of souls. The generation that "has already come" (§ 121); and the parable of the garments, stripped from the servants who spoiled them, washed until no stain remains, and re-worn by new servants, the soul returning into garments worn by others before, while "the spirit returns to God who gave it" (§ 122).

A provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim (with a flagged citation slip: § 122's Ecclesiastes 12:6 for the verse at 12:7); the standard modern English translation (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright.

מאי דור דור אמר ר' פפייס דור הולך ודור בא (קהלת א' ד') ואמר רבי עקיבא דור בא שכבר בא:

What is 'generation, generation'? Rabbi Papyas said: 'a generation goes and a generation comes' (Ecclesiastes 1:4). And Rabbi Akiva said: 'a generation comes': one that has already come.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

משל למה"ד למלך שהיו לו עבדים והלבישן כפי יכלתו בגדי משי ורקמה, קלקלו השורה, השליכן ודחפן מעליו והפשיטן בגדיו והלכו להם, לקח הבגדים ורחצן היטב עד שלא נותר בהן שום סיג והניחן אצלו מזומנין, וקנה עבדים אחרים והלבישן הבגדים ההם והוא לא ידע אם טובים הם אותם העבדים אם לאו, והרי זכו בבגדים שכבר באו לעולם ולבשום אחרים לפניהם, אבל הארץ לעולם עומדת והיינו דכתיב (קהלת י"ב ו') וישב העפר על הארץ כשהיה והרוח תשוב אל האלהים אשר נתנה:

A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had servants, and he clothed them, according to his means, in garments of silk and embroidery. They spoiled the order [of their conduct]; he cast them off and thrust them from before him and stripped them of his garments, and they went their way. He took the garments and washed them well, until no stain (sig) remained in them, and set them beside him, ready; and he bought other servants and clothed them in those garments, and he did not know whether those servants were good or not. So they came into possession of garments that had already come into the world and had been worn by others before them. But the earth stands forever; and this is what is written

(Ecclesiastes 12:6 in the source; the verse is at 12:7), ‘and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.’

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the generation that has already come

Ecclesiastes 1:4, ‘a generation goes and a generation comes,’ is glossed by Rabbi Akiva: ‘a generation comes’, one ‘that has already come.’ Sod: the returning generation, the soul that comes again, the doctrine the next section unfolds.

the garments and the return of souls (gilgul)

The king clothes his servants in fine garments; when they 'spoil the order' he strips the garments, washes them until 'no stain remains,' and clothes new servants in them, who thus 'come into possession of garments that had already come into the world and were worn by others before them,' while 'the earth stands forever' and 'the spirit returns to God who gave it' (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Sod: the garments are the bodies, or the souls: reused across lives; this is among the earliest clear statements of the transmigration of souls (gilgul) in the Kabbalah, the soul cleansed and re-clothed in new bearers. Gershom Scholem identified this parable as the first Kabbalistic doctrine of metempsychosis. (The verbatim Hebrew cites the verse as Ecclesiastes 12:6; the verse is at 12:7.) *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

Editorial decisions

- **§122 Ecclesiastes citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites 'the dust returns… the spirit returns to God' as Ecclesiastes 12:6, but the verse is at 12:7 (a vav/zayin scribal slip, 6 for 7). Rendered as the source gives it with the correct locus flagged, at publish.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 123-125; the ten sefirot

Where the Bahir names the ten sefirot and gives the word its meaning. Aaron's blessing after the sacrifice, a unification of the upper grades (§ 123); the ten fingers as the ten sefirot "by which heaven and earth were sealed," the Ten Commandments, and the 613, with the tet, "the belly," held apart (§ 124); and the name itself: they are "sefirot" because "the heavens declare the glory of God," from the root that means both to count and to tell (§ 125).

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אמר ר׳ אמוראי מאי דכתיב (ויקרא ט׳ כ״ב) וישא אהרן את ידו אל העם ויברכם, וירד, והרי כבר ירד, אלא וירד מעשות החטאת והעולה והשלמים ואח״כ וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם, נשיאות זו למה, לפי שהקריב קרבן ונתקרב לפני אביהם שבשמים כדאמרינן צריך אותו שמקרבן לעליונים ומייחדן לייחד בכללן אלו, ומאי העם דכתיב אל העם, בעבור העם:

Rabbi Amorai said: what is written (Leviticus 9:22), ‘and Aaron lifted his hand toward the people and blessed them, and he descended’? [Had he not] already descended? Rather, ‘and he descended’ from making the sin-offering, the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings; and afterward, ‘Aaron lifted his hands toward the people.’ This lifting: why? Because he had offered a sacrifice and drawn near before their Father in heaven, as we said: the one who offers [them] to the upper ones and unifies them must unify all these in their totality. And what is ‘the people,’ as it is written, ‘toward the people’? For the sake of the people.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי טעמא בנשיאות כפים וליברוך להון בברכה, אלא משום דאית בידים עשר אצבעות, רמז לעשר ספירות שבהם נחתמו שמים וארץ, ואותם העשרה כנגד עשרת הדברות, ובכלל אותן י׳ נכללו תרי״ג מצות, ומנה אותם אותיות של י׳ דברות ותשכח דאינו״ן תרי״ג אותיות, ובהם כל

And what is the reason [it is] in the lifting of the hands, and to bless them with a blessing? Rather, because there are in the hands ten fingers, a hint to the ten sefirot by which heaven and earth were sealed. And those ten are corresponding to the Ten Commandments (aseret ha-dibrot); and within those ten are

כ"ב אותיות בר מן ט' דליתא בהון, מאי טעמא, ללמדך דט' הוא בטן ואינה בכלל הספירות:

included the six hundred and thirteen commandments. Count the letters of the Ten Commandments, and you will find that they are six hundred and thirteen letters, and in them are all twenty-two letters, except for the tet, which is not among them. What is the reason? To teach you that the tet is the belly (beten), and is not among the sefirot.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ואמאי קרי ליה ספירות, משום דכתיב (תהלים י"ט ב) השמים מספרים כבוד אל:

And why does he call them 'sefirot'? Because it is written (Psalm 19:2), 'the heavens declare (mesaprim) the glory of God.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



▽

An orientation

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Aaron's blessing as unification

'And Aaron lifted his hand toward the people and blessed them, and he descended' (Leviticus 9:22) is read: he 'descended' from offering the sin-, burnt-, and peace-offerings, and then 'lifted his hands.' The lifting-and-blessing follows the offering because 'one who offers to the upper ones and unifies them' must 'unify all these in their totality'; and 'toward the people' means 'for the sake of the people.' Sod: the priestly blessing, hands raised after the sacrifice, is a theurgic unification of the upper grades on behalf of Israel (cf. the korban that 'brings near,' § 109).

the ten fingers and the ten sefirot

The blessing is given with the ten fingers because they hint at the ten sefirot 'by which heaven and earth were sealed', corresponding to the Ten Commandments, which contain the six hundred and thirteen commandments (the letters of the Decalogue are counted as 613, holding all twenty-two letters save the tet). The tet is excluded because 'the tet is the belly (beten)' and 'is not among the sefirot.' Sod: here the ten sefirot are explicitly named as the ten, the emanations by which the world was made (Sefer Yetzirah 1:1-4, 'ten sefirot of nothingness'), mirrored in the ten fingers, the Ten Words, and the whole

Torah; the tet, the ninth letter and the 'belly,' held apart from the count.

why they are called 'sefirot'

The grades are called 'sefirot' because 'the heavens declare (mesaprim) the glory of God' (Psalm 19:2), from the root s-p-r, to count, to tell, to declare. Sod: the sefirot are at once the 'numbers' (the ten) and the 'tellings,' the utterances by which the hidden God is declared; the heavens, the grades, speak the glory. The word also resonates with sappir, sapphire, the throne of § 96.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 126-128; the Kedushah and the crown

The liturgy of sanctification mapped onto the highest grades. The three dominions and the chariot-hosts who crown the King with three sanctifications (§ 126); why three and not four, the sanctification above is "three by three," culminating in the thirteen attributes of mercy (§ 127); and the Trisagion "holy, holy, holy" read as the three highest grades: the supernal crown, the root of the tree, and the union (§ 128).

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ומאי ניהו, תלתא אינון, ובכללן שלשה חיילות ושלשה ממשלות, הממשלה הראשונה אור, ואור החיים של מים, הממשלה השניה חיות הקודש והאופנים וגלגלי המרכבה וכל גדודיו של הקב"ה מברכין ומעריצין ומהדרין ומפארין ומקדישין למלך נאדר בקדושה ונערך בסוד קדושים רבה, מלך איום ונורא ומכתירין בשלש קדושות:

And what are they? They are three, and within them three armies (chayalot) and three dominions (memshalot). The first dominion is light, and the light of the life of water. The second dominion is the holy living creatures (chayot) and the ofanim and the wheels of the chariot (galgalei ha-merkavah) and all the troops of the Holy One, who bless and revere and adorn and glorify and sanctify the King, glorious in holiness, arrayed in the great secret of the holy ones (sod kedoshim rabbah), a king awesome and terrible; and they crown [Him] with three sanctifications (shalosh kedushot).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי ניהו שלש קדושות ולא ארבע, מפני שקדושת מעלה שלש שלש, דכתיב ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד, וכתיב (במדבר ז' כד ו) יברכך ה' יאר ה' ישא ה', וכתיב (שמות ל"ד ו) ה' ה' והשאר של מדות ה' שלישי מה

And what are the three sanctifications, and not four? Because the sanctification above is three by three, as it is written, 'the LORD reigns, the LORD reigned, the LORD will reign forever and ever'; and it is written (Numbers 6:24-26), 'may the LORD bless you, may the LORD make His face shine, may the LORD lift up

הוי ה' אל רחום וחנון וגו' שלש עשרה מדות:

His face'; and it is written (Exodus 34:6), 'the LORD, the LORD', and the rest of the attributes; 'the LORD' the third, what is it? 'the LORD, God merciful and gracious,' and so on, the thirteen attributes (shelosh esreh midot).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ומאי הוי קדוש קדוש קדוש ואחר כך ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו (ישעי' ו' ג) אלא קדוש כתר עליון, קדוש שורש האילן, קדוש דבק ומיוחד בכלם ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו:

And what is 'holy, holy, holy,' and afterward 'the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isaiah 6:3)? Rather: 'holy' is the supernal crown (keter elyon); 'holy' is the root of the tree (shoresh ha-ilan); 'holy' is cleaving and unified in them all: 'the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



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An orientation

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the three dominions and the crowning hosts

The grades are ‘three,’ holding three armies and three dominions: the first dominion ‘light, and the light of the life of water’; the second the holy living creatures (chayot), the ofanim, and ‘the wheels of the chariot (galgalei ha-merkavah)’, the hosts of Ezekiel’s vision, and all the troops of the Holy One, who ‘crown Him with three sanctifications.’ Sod: the celestial hosts of the merkavah render the threefold Kedushah, crowning the King; the ‘great secret of the holy ones’ is the liturgy of sanctification below mirroring the order above.

the three-by-three sanctifications and the thirteen attributes

Why ‘three’ sanctifications and not four? Because ‘the sanctification above is three by three.’ The threefold pattern recurs: ‘the LORD reigns / reigned / will reign’; the three clauses of the priestly blessing (‘may the LORD bless / make shine / lift up,’ Numbers 6:24-26); and the doubled Name of Exodus 34:6 (‘the LORD, the LORD… God merciful and

gracious'), the third 'LORD' opening the thirteen attributes of mercy. Sod: the threefold structure of the upper grades, sounded in the liturgy. (The verbatim Hebrew's numeral for the priestly blessing is garbled here; the blessing is at Numbers 6:24-26.)

the Trisagion: Keter, the root of the tree, and the union

'Holy, holy, holy, the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isaiah 6:3) is read as the three highest grades: the first 'holy' is the supernal crown (keter elyon), Keter; the second 'holy' is 'the root of the tree' (Ḥokhmah, or the trunk from which the sefirot branch); the third 'holy' is 'cleaving and unified in them all', the grade that binds, opening to 'the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.' Sod: the Trisagion mapped onto the topmost sefirot, the crown, the root, and the uniting, the seraphic cry as a naming of the tree's summit.

Editorial decisions

- **§127 Numbers citation.** The verbatim Hebrew's numeral for the priestly blessing is garbled (reads as Numbers 7:24, 6); the blessing is at Numbers 6:24-26. Rendered the correct locus with an apparatus note.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 129-130; the uniting holy and the glory

Closing the Kedushah. The uniting “holy” as a king who pours his goodness to sons and grandsons when they are worthy, and to the fathers alone when they are not (§ 129); and “the whole earth is full of His glory”, the supernal earth full of the glory of the Name, which is Wisdom, the wisdom by which the world was made (§ 130).

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ומאי ניהו קדוש שהוא דבוק ומיוחד, אלא למה"ד למלך שהיו לו בנים ולבנים בנים, בזמן שבניהם עושים רצונו נכנס ביניהם ומעמיד הכל ומשביע הכל ומשפיע להם טובה כדי שישבעו האבות והבנים, וכשאין הבנים עושים רצונו משביע להם לאבות כדי צרכם:

And what is 'holy' that is cleaving and unified? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had sons, and the sons had sons; at the time that their sons do his will, he enters among them and sustains all and satisfies all and pours goodness upon them, so that the fathers and the sons are satisfied; and when the sons do not do his will, he satisfies the fathers according to their need.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי ניהו מלא כל הארץ כבודו (שם), אלא כל אותה ארץ שנבראת ביום הראשון שהיא למעלה כנגד ארץ ישראל מליאה מכבוד השם, ומאי ניהו, חכמה דכתיב (משלי ג' לה) כבוד חכמים ינחלו, ואומר (יחזקאל ג' יב) ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו:

And what is 'the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isaiah 6:3)? Rather, all that earth which was created on the first day, which is above, corresponding to the land of Israel, is full of the glory of the Name. And what is it? Wisdom (chokhmah), as it is written (Proverbs 3:35), 'the wise shall inherit glory'; and it says (Ezekiel 3:12), 'blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place.'

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the uniting holy and the flow to the generations

The third 'holy', 'cleaving and unified' (§ 128), is figured as a king with sons and grandsons: when the grandsons do his will, he 'enters among them' and satisfies all, fathers and sons together; when they do not, he satisfies only the fathers 'according to their need.' Sod: the uniting grade (the reconciling center, Tiferet, or the flow itself) pours the divine goodness to all the generations and grades when they are worthy, and withholds it from the lower when they are not, the flow gated by merit (cf. the twelve channels, § 113).

the earth full of glory: wisdom

'The whole earth is full of His glory' (Isaiah 6:3): the 'earth' is the supernal earth 'created on the first day,' which is above, corresponding to the land of Israel, and it is 'full of the glory of the Name', which is Wisdom (chokhmah): 'the wise shall inherit

glory' (Proverbs 3:35), 'blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place' (Ezekiel 3:12). Sod: the glory (kavod) that fills the supernal earth is Ḥokhmah, the wisdom by which the world was made; the 'place' that none can know (cf. § 90). (Notably, § 130 cites Ezekiel 3:12 correctly, where § 90 gave the same verse as an impossible 3:42: confirming that reading as a local scribal slip.)

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 131-134; the Matronita and the glory

The Bahir's clearest namings of the Shekhinah, the divine feminine. The glory of the LORD as a Matronita in the king's chamber, blessed by her sons though unseen (§ 131); the king's daughter come from afar, a woman of valor from the side of the light (§ 132); the fine plot beside the garden, "not attached though it is all one," watered by its own channel (§ 133); and glory and heart as one grade under two names, above and below (§ 134).

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ומאי הוי כבוד ה' זה, משל למה"ד למלך שהיתה לו מטרוניתא בחדרו שכל חיילותיו משתעשעין בה, והיו לה בנים ובאים בכל יום לראות פני המלך ומברכין אותו, אמרו לו אמנו אנה היא, אמר להם לא תוכלו לראותה עתה, אמרו ברוכה תהא בכל מקום שהיא:

And what is this 'glory of the LORD'? A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a noble lady (matronita) in his chamber, in whom all his hosts delighted; and she had sons who came every day to see the king's face and to bless him. They said to him: our mother, where is she? He said to them: you cannot see her now. They said: blessed be she, in every place that she is.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי דכתיב (שם) ממקומו, מכלל דליכא דידע את מקומו, משל לבת מלך שבאה מרחוק ולא ידעו מאין באה, עד שראו שהיא אשת חיל נאה והגונה בכל מעשיה, אמרו זאת ודאי מצד האור נלקחה, כי במעשיה יאיר העולם, שאלו אותה מאין את, אמרה ממקומי אמרו אם כן גדולים אנשי מקומך, ברוכה תהיי ומבורכת מקומה:

And what is [the meaning of] what is written, 'from His place' (Ezekiel 3:12)? Implying that none knows His place. A parable: to a king's daughter (bat melekh) who came from afar, and they did not know whence she had come, until they saw that she was a woman of valor (eshet chayil), fair and fitting in all her deeds. They said: this one was surely taken from the side of the light, for by her deeds the world is illumined. They asked her: whence are you? She said: from my place (mi-mkomi). They said: if so, the people of your place are great;

blessed be you, and blessed be her place.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

וכי אין כבוד ה' זה אחת מצבאותיו, לא גרע, אמאי מברכין ליה, אלא משל למה"ד לאיש שהיה לו גן נאה וחוץ לגן בקרוב ממנו חתיכת שדה נאה עשה בו גינה נאה השקה את הגן בתחלת שקיותו והלכו להם המים על כל הגן אך לא על אותה חתיכה של שדה שהיא אינה דבקה אע"פ שהכל אחד הוא, לפיכך פתח לה מקום והשקה לה לבדה:

And is not this 'glory of the LORD' one of His hosts? Is it [then] diminished? Why do they bless it? Rather, a parable: to what is it comparable? To a man who had a fair garden, and outside the garden, near it, a fine piece of field; and he made in it a fine garden-plot. He watered the garden at the beginning of his watering, and the water went over the whole garden, but not over that piece of field, which is not attached [to it]: even though it is all one. Therefore he opened a place for it, and watered it separately.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

אמר רבי רחומאי כבו"ד ול"ב הרי הם אחד, אלא שהכבוד נקרא על שם פעולת מעלה, ולב נקרא

Rabbi Rechumai said: 'glory (kavod)' and 'heart (lev)': behold, they are one; except that the glory

על שם פעולת מטה, והיינו כבוד השם והיינו לב השמים:

is named for the action above, and the heart is named for the action below. And this is ‘the glory of the Name (kevod ha-shem),’ and this is ‘the heart of heaven (lev ha-shamayim).’

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.

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the Matronita and her sons

The ‘glory of the LORD’ is figured as a noble lady (matronita) in the king’s chamber, delighted in by all his hosts; her sons come daily to see the king and bless him, and though they cannot see their mother, they bless her ‘in every place she is.’ Sod: the Matronita is the Shekhinah, the divine queen and mother, hidden yet present; Israel her sons, blessing her though she is unseen, ‘blessed be the glory of the LORD from His place’

(Ezekiel 3:12). One of the Bahir's clearest namings of the Shekhinah as queen and mother (the term the Zohar will make central).

the king's daughter from afar

'From His place', the place none can know, is read through a daughter who 'came from afar,' a 'woman of valor (eshet chayil)' by whose deeds the world is lit, 'taken from the side of the light,' from a place whose people are great. Sod: the Shekhinah as the king's daughter (cf. sections 54 and 63), descended from the supernal light; her 'place' the hidden source; the eshet chayil of Proverbs 31 read as the divine feminine.

the plot watered separately

Why bless the glory, if it is one of the hosts? A man waters his garden, and the flow reaches all of it, but not a fine plot of field beside it, 'not attached, though it is all one'; so he opens a channel and waters it separately. Sod: the Shekhinah / Malkhut, though one with the whole, stands slightly apart, the last grade, and must be watered by its own channel, the flow directed to it in particular (cf. the twelve channels, section 113).

glory and heart are one

’Glory (kavod)’ and ‘heart (lev)’ are one grade under two names: ‘glory’ for its action above, ‘heart’ for its action below, ‘the glory of the Name’ and ‘the heart of heaven’ (Deuteronomy 4:11; cf. section 106). Sod: one reality seen from above as glory and from below as the heart, the Shekhinah as the indwelling glory, or the central heart of the tree, named by its two faces.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 135-136; the patriarchs as the middot

One of the foundational passages of the whole Kabbalah: the patriarchs as the measures (middot). Abraham given the measure of loving-kindness for his hospitality; Isaac the measure of dread, the chaos and the consuming fire; Jacob the measure of truth. The world endures by the lifting of Moses' hands, drawing on the powers of the fathers; and loving-kindness itself "is the Torah," fed freely without money (§§ 135-136).

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Rabbi Yochanan said: what is written (Exodus 17:11), ‘and it came to pass, when Moses raised his hand, that Israel prevailed,’ and ‘when he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed’? This teaches that the world endures by the lifting of the hands. What is the reason? Because of that power which was given to Jacob our father, whose name is Israel. To Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob powers were given, one to each and every one; and by the measure (middah) that each one walked, its like was given to him. Abraham did loving-kindness (gemilut chesed) in the world, for he would prepare food for all who come into the world and for wayfarers, and do loving-kindness, and go out to meet them, as it is written (Genesis 18:2), ‘and he ran to meet them’; and moreover, ‘and he bowed to the earth’ (ibid.), this was complete loving-kindness. And the Holy One measured him by his measure, and gave him the measure of loving-kindness (chesed), as it is written (Micah 7:20), ‘you give truth to Jacob, loving-kindness to Abraham, which you swore to our fathers from days of old.’ What is ‘from days of old’? This teaches that if Abraham had not done

אמר ר’ יוחנן מאי דכתיב (שמות י”ז יא) והיה כאשר ירים משה ידו וגבר ישראל (שמות י”ג יא) וכאשר יניח ידו וגבר עמלק, מלמד שהעולם מתקיים בשביל נשיאת כפים, מאי טעמא, משום דאותו כח שניתן ליעקב אבינו שמו ישראל, לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ניתני כוחות, אחד לכל אחד ואחד, ובמדה שהלך כל אחד ואחד דוגמתה ניתן לו, אברהם גמל חסד לעולם שהיה מזמין לכל באי עולם ועוברי דרכים מזון וגומל חסד ויוצא לקראתם דכתיב (בראשית י”ח ב) וירץ לקראתם, ועוד וישתחו ארצה (שם) זאת היתה גמילת חסד שלימה, והקב”ה מדד לו במדתו ונתן לו מדת החסד דכתיב (מיכה ז’ כ) תתן אמת ליעקב חסד לאברהם, אשר נשבעת לאבותינו מימי קדם, מאי מימי קדם, מלמד שאם לא היה אברהם גומל חסד וזוכה למדת חסד לא היה יעקב זוכה למדת אמת, שבזכות שזכה אברהם למדת חסד זכה יצחק למדת פחד דכתיב (בראשית ל”א נג) וישבע יעקב בפחד אביו יצחק, אטו יש איש שישבע כך באמונת פחד אביו, אלא עד כאן

לא ניתן ליעקב כח, ונשבע בכח שניתן לאביו שנאמר וישבע יעקב בפחד אביו יצחק, ומאי ניהו, תהו שממנו יוצא הרע המתהא את בני אדם, ומאי ניהו, הוא דכתיב (מ"א י"ח לח) ותפול אש ותאכל את העולה ואת העצים ואת האבנים ואת העפר ואת המים אשר בתעלה לחכה, וכתיב (דברים ד כד) כי ה' אלהיך אש אוכלה הוא אל קנא:

loving-kindness and merited the measure of loving-kindness, Jacob would not have merited the measure of truth (emet); for by the merit that Abraham merited the measure of loving-kindness, Isaac merited the measure of dread (pachad), as it is written (Genesis 31:53), 'and Jacob swore by the Dread of his father Isaac.' Now, is there a man who would swear thus, by the faith of the dread of his father? Rather, until here no power had yet been given to Jacob; and he swore by the power that had been given to his father, as it is said, 'and Jacob swore by the Dread of his father Isaac.' And what is it? Chaos (tohu), from which goes forth the evil that confounds the sons of man. And what is it? It is that which is written (1 Kings 18:38), 'and fire fell and consumed the burnt-offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench'; and it is written (Deuteronomy 4:24), 'for the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.'

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ומאי ניהו חסד, היינו תורה דכתיב (ישעי' נ"ה א) הוי כל צמא לכו למים ואשר אין לו כסף, הוא כסף דכתיב לכו שברו ואכלו ולכו שברו בלא כסף ובלא מחיר יין וחלב, יאכילכם תורה וילמדכם כי כבר זכיתם לכך בזכות אברהם אשר היה גומל חסד, בלא כסף היה מאכיל, ומשקה בלא מחיר יין וחלב:

And what is loving-kindness (chesed)? It is the Torah, as it is written (Isaiah 55:1), 'ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money': it is money (kesef), as it is written, 'come, buy and eat; come, buy without money and without price, wine and milk.' He will feed you Torah and teach you, for you have already merited this by the merit of Abraham, who did loving-kindness: without money he would feed, and give drink without price, wine and milk.

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the patriarchs as the measures

The world endures by the lifting of Moses' hands because of the powers given to the patriarchs, each measured (middah) by how he walked. Abraham, for his hospitality, was given the measure of loving-kindness (chesed), 'loving-kindness to Abraham' (Micah 7:20); Isaac the measure of dread (pachad); Jacob the measure of truth (emet), 'truth to Jacob.' Sod: the patriarchs are the middot, the sefirot of the divine 'body': Abraham = Chesed (the right arm), Isaac = Gevurah / Pachad (the left arm, dread and judgment), Jacob = Tiferet / Emet (the harmonizing center, truth and peace). This is among the Bahir's foundational mappings of the patriarchs to the grades, the scheme the whole later Kabbalah inherits.

the dread, the chaos, and the consuming fire

Isaac's measure of dread (pachad) is glossed as 'chaos (tohu), from which goes forth the evil that confounds the sons of man,' and as the consuming fire, 'fire fell and consumed the burnt-offering... and licked up the water' (1 Kings 18:38), 'for the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God' (Deuteronomy 4:24). Sod: the grade of severity (Gevurah / Din), when it breaks from the whole, is the root of the chaos

and the destructive fire, the daring Kabbalistic location of the origin of evil in an unbalanced divine severity (see the discussion under Gevurah).

loving-kindness is the Torah

The measure of loving-kindness is identified with the Torah: 'everyone who thirsts, come to the waters… buy without money and without price, wine and milk' (Isaiah 55:1), He feeds Torah 'without money,' as Abraham fed the wayfarers without price. Sod: Chesed, the giving grade, is the Torah freely given; the merit of Abraham's free giving is what lets Israel 'buy without money' the Torah of truth (cf. the Torah as milk and honey, and Chesed as the flow of grace, § 51).

Editorial decisions

- **Exodus 17:11 citation.** Both halves of the verse ('when Moses raised his hand, Israel prevailed' and 'when he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed') are Exodus 17:11. The source cites the second half as Exodus 13:11 (a zayin/gimel slip, 13 for 17); rendered with the correct single locus and the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 137-138; wine and milk, the Torah of truth

The patriarchs-as-measures thread continued. Wine as dread (Gevurah) and milk as loving-kindness (Ḥesed); Jacob's measure of truth, "the measure of peace," in which "perfect (tam)" is at once peace, Torah, and uprightness (§ 137); and the Torah of truth as the measure "called Israel" that sustains the ten sayings by which the world stands, upheld by Moses' ten raised fingers (§ 138).

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מהו יין וחלב, ומה ענין זה אצל זה, אלא מלמד שהיין הוא פחד וחלב הוא חסד, ומפני מה הזכיר יין תחילה, מפני שהוא קרוב אלינו יותר, יין וחלב סלקא דעתך, אלא אימא דמות יין וחלב, ובזכות אברהם שזכה למדת חסד זכה יצחק למדת פחד, והואיל וזכה יצחק למדת פחד זכה יעקב למדת אמת, שהוא מדת שלום, ומדד לו הקב"ה כמדתו דכתיב (בראשית כ"ה כז) ויעקב איש תם יושב אהלים ואין תם אלא שלום דכתיב (דברים י"ח יג) תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך, ומתרגמינן שלים תהא, ואין תם אלא תורה שנאמר (מלאכי ב' ו) תורת אמת היתה בפיהו וגו', ומה כתיב בתריה בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי, ואין מישור אלא שלום דכתיב (תהלים כ"ח כא) תום ויושר, הלכך והיה כאשר ירים משה ידו וגבר ישראל (שמות י"ג יא) מלמד שהמדה שנקראת ישראל בתוכה תורת אמת:

What is 'wine and milk,' and what has this to do with that? Rather, it teaches that wine is dread (pachad) and milk is loving-kindness (chesed). And why did it mention wine first? Because it is nearer to us. 'Wine and milk', do you [take it so]? Rather say: the likeness of wine and milk. And by the merit of Abraham, who merited the measure of loving-kindness, Isaac merited the measure of dread (pachad); and since Isaac merited the measure of dread, Jacob merited the measure of truth (emet), which is the measure of peace (shalom); and the Holy One measured him by his measure, as it is written (Genesis 25:27), 'and Jacob was a perfect man (ish tam), dwelling in tents.' And 'perfect (tam)' is nothing but peace, as it is written (Deuteronomy 18:13), 'you shall be perfect (tamim) with the LORD your God,' which we render [in the Targum] 'you shall be complete (shalim).' And 'perfect (tam)' is nothing but Torah, as it is said (Malachi 2:6), 'the Torah of truth was in his mouth,' and so on. And what is written after it? 'In peace and uprightness he walked with me.' And 'uprightness (mishor)' is nothing but peace, as it is written (Psalm 25:21), 'perfection and uprightness (tom va-yosher).'

Therefore, ‘and it came to pass, when Moses raised his hand, that Israel prevailed’ (Exodus 17:11), this teaches that within the measure that is called Israel is the Torah of truth.

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ומאי ניהו תורת אמת, דבר שמורה על אמיתות העולמים ופעולתו במחשבה והוא מעמיד עשרה מאמרות שבהם עומד העולם והוא אחד מהם, וברא באדם כנגד אותם עשרה מאמרות עשר אצבעות ידים, וכשהיה משה מרים ידו ומכוין במיעוט כוונת הלב באותה המדה הנקראת ישראל ובתוכה תורת אמת ורומז לו עשר אצבעות ידיו שהוא מעמיד את העשרה, ואם לא יעזור את ישראל לא יתקיימו העשרה מאמרות בכל יום ויום הלכך וגבר ישראל, וכאשר יניח ידו וגבר עמלק (שם) וכי היה משה עושה שיגבר עמלק דכתיב וכאשר יניח ידו וגבר עמלק, אלא אסור לו לאדם לשהות שלש שעות כפיו פרושות השמים:

And what is the Torah of truth? A thing that indicates the truth of the worlds, and its action is in thought (machashavah); and it sustains the ten sayings (asara ma’amarot) by which the world stands, and it is one of them. And He created in man, corresponding to those ten sayings, ten fingers of the hands. And when Moses would raise his hands and direct, with a little intention of the heart, to that measure which is called Israel, within which is the Torah of truth, and he pointed to it with the ten fingers of his hands, [showing] that it sustains the ten: and if it does not help Israel, the ten sayings would not endure each and every day; therefore, ‘Israel prevailed.’ ‘And when he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed’ (ibid.), but did Moses [bring it about] that

Amalek prevailed, as it is written, ‘and when he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed’? Rather, it is forbidden for a person to keep his palms spread to heaven [longer than] three hours.

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wine, milk, and the measure of peace

Wine is dread (pachad, Gevurah) and milk is loving-kindness (chesed, the giving grade), ‘the likeness of wine and milk,’ not literal; wine is named first because ‘it is nearer to us.’ By the merit-chain (Abraham’s chesed, then Isaac’s pachad), Jacob merited the measure of truth (emet), ‘the measure of peace’: ‘Jacob was a perfect man (ish tam)’ (Genesis 25:27), and ‘tam’ is peace (‘you shall be shalim,’ Deuteronomy 18:13 per the

Targum), Torah (‘the Torah of truth,’ Malachi 2:6), and uprightness/peace (‘perfection and uprightness,’ Psalm 25:21). Sod: Jacob = Tiferet / Emet, the harmonizing center that is ‘peace’ between milk (Chesed) and wine (Gevurah); the measure called Israel holds the Torah of truth. (The verbatim Hebrew cites the last verse as Psalm 28:21, which cannot be, Psalm 28 has nine verses; the phrase ‘tom va-yosher’ is at Psalm 25:21.)

the Torah of truth and the ten sayings

The ‘Torah of truth’ is the measure (Tiferet, the grade ‘called Israel’) that ‘indicates the truth of the worlds,’ acts ‘in thought (machashavah),’ and ‘sustains the ten sayings by which the world stands,’ being itself one of them. Man’s ten fingers correspond to the ten sayings; Moses, raising his hands and directing his heart to ‘the measure called Israel,’ pointed with his ten fingers that it upholds the ten, so ‘Israel prevailed,’ for without its help ‘the ten sayings would not endure each day.’ Sod: the central grade, holding the Torah of truth, upholds the ten creative utterances by which the world was made (Avot 5:1); the raised hands a theurgic act sustaining the world, yet ‘forbidden to keep the palms spread more than three hours.‘

Editorial decisions

- **Psalm 25:21 citation.** The verbatim Hebrew cites ‘tom va-yosher’ as Psalm 28:21, which is impossible (Psalm 28 has nine verses); the phrase is at Psalm 25:21. Rendered with the correct locus and the slip noted.
- **Exodus 17:11 citation.** Both halves of the raised/lowered-hand verse are Exodus 17:11; the source again gives the second half as 13:11 (as in section 135). Rendered at the correct single locus.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 139-140; the hands raised to heaven

Closing the passage on Moses' raised hands. The hands are lifted "to the height of heaven," and Israel's enlightened ones, who know the secret of the Name, are answered the moment they call (§ 139); and "then (az)" is read by its letters, the alef, which may not be called alone, joined to the zayin, seven, the seven of the ten sayings: the One invoked together with the seven (§ 140).

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שאלו לו תלמידיו למי נושאין כפים, אמר להם לרום השמים, מנא לן, דכתיב (חבקוק ג' י) נתן תהום קולו רום ידהו נשא, הא למדת שאין נשיאת כפים אלא לרום שמים, וכשיש בישראל משכילים ויודעים את סוד השם הנכבד ונושאים כפיהם, מיד נענים שנאמר (ישעי' נ"ח ט) אז תקרא וה' יענה, אם אז תקרא ה' יענה מיד:

His students asked him: to whom are the hands raised? He said to them: to the height of heaven. And whence do we [know this]? As it is written (Habakkuk 3:10), 'the deep gave its voice; it lifted its hands on high.' From here you learn that the raising of the hands is only to the height of heaven. And when there are among Israel enlightened ones (maskilim) who know the secret of the honored Name and raise their hands, they are immediately answered, as it is said (Isaiah 58:9), 'then you shall call, and the LORD will answer.' If 'then you shall call,' the LORD answers immediately.

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מאי ניהו אז, אלא מלמד שאין רשות לקרוא לאל"ף לבדה אלא על ידי שנים האותיות הדבקים בה היושבים ראשונה במלכות, ועם האל"ף הם שלשה ונשארו שבע מעשרה מאמרות, והיינו ז' דכתיב (שמות ט"ו א) אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל גם כן:

What is 'then (az)'? Rather, it teaches that there is no permission to call to the alef alone, but by means of the two letters that cleave to it, which sit first in kingship (malkhut); and with the alef they are three, and there remain seven of the ten sayings, and this is the zayin (seven), as it is written (Exodus 15:1), 'then (az) Moses

and the children of Israel sang,’
likewise.

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the hands raised to the height of heaven

The priestly raising of the hands is directed ‘to the height of heaven’, ‘the deep gave its voice; it lifted its hands on high’ (Habakkuk 3:10). And when Israel’s ‘enlightened ones (maskilim),’ those who ‘know the secret of the honored Name,’ raise their hands, they are answered at once: ‘then you shall call, and the LORD will answer’ (Isaiah 58:9). Sod: the raised hands, joined to knowledge of the Name, draw an immediate response from the supernal height, the theurgy of §§ 138-139 completed by right intention.

‘then’ (az): the alef and the seven

’Then (az)’, the word that opens both ‘then you shall call’ (Isaiah 58:9) and ‘then Moses sang’ (Exodus 15:1), is read by its letters: alef (א) and zayin (ז), one and seven. The alef ‘may not be called alone,’ but only joined to the letters that ‘sit first in kingship (malkhut)’: with the alef they are three [above], and there remain seven of the ten sayings: the zayin, seven. Sod: the One (the alef, the first grade) can be invoked only together with the seven (the seven lower grades / sayings), so that ‘az’ names the whole ten bound as one; the answered prayer of § 139 is the Name rightly called, the alef joined to the seven.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 141-143; the ten sayings, one to three

The ten sayings enumerated as the sefirot, one to three. The first is the supernal crown (Keter), whose people is Israel, bound to Him “to the alef” (§ 141); the second is wisdom (Chokhmah), “the beginning of His way” (§ 142); the third is the quarry of the Torah, the treasury of wisdom from which the Holy One “quarried all the letters of the Torah and engraved them in the spirit”, Binah, the mother (§ 143).

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What are the ten sayings? The first: the supernal crown (keter elyon), blessed and praised be His Name and His people. And who is His people? Israel, as it is written (Psalm 100:3), 'know that the LORD is God; He made me, and lo we [are] His people,' and to the alef are we: to recognize and to know the Unique One of the unique, unified in all His Names.

מאי ניהו עשרה מאמרות, ראשון כתר עליון ברוך ומבורך שמו ועמו, ומי עמו, ישראל, דכתיב (תהלים ק' ג) דעו כי ה' הוא אלהים הוא עשני ולא אנחנו עמו, ולאל"ף אנחנו, להכיר ולידע אחד האחדים המיוחד בכל שמותיו:

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The second: wisdom (chokhmah), as it is written (Proverbs 8:22), 'the LORD acquired me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old.' And 'beginning (reshit)' is nothing but wisdom, as it is written (Psalm 111:10), 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD.'

שניה, חכמה, דכתיב (משלי ח' כב) ה' קנני ראשית דרכו קדם מפעליו מאז, ואין ראשית אלא חכמה דכתיב (תהלים קי"א י) ראשית חכמה יראת ה':

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שלישי, מחצב התורה, אוצר החכמה, מחצבה רוח אלהים, מלמד שחצב הקב"ה כל אותיות התורה וחקקו ברוח, ועשה בו צורותיו, והיינו דכתיב (ש"א ב' ב) ואין צור כאלהינו, ואין צייר כאלהינו:

The third: the quarry of the Torah (machtzav ha-Torah), the treasury of wisdom (otzar ha-chokhmah), the quarry of the spirit of God (machtzav ruach Elohim); it teaches that the Holy One quarried all the letters of the Torah and engraved them in the spirit, and made in it His forms; and this is what is written (1 Samuel 2:2), 'and there is no rock (tzur) like our God': there is no former (tzayar) like our God.

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An orientation

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the first saying: the supernal crown

The first of the ten sayings (by which the world was made, Avot 5:1) is the supernal crown (keter elyon), Keter, the highest grade.

'His people' is Israel: 'He made me, and lo we, His people' (Psalm 100:3). The verse turns on a well-known variant, the word rendered 'lo' is written לא ('not') but read לו ('to Him'), and the Bahir hears in it the alef (the first letter of לא): 'to the alef are we,' belonging to the One, 'the Unique of the unique, unified in all His Names.' Sod: Israel is bound to Keter, the first grade, through the alef, the primal letter of thought (cf. §§ 70, 117, 140).

the second saying: wisdom

The second saying is wisdom (chokhmah), Chokhmah, the second grade, anchored in 'the LORD acquired me (kanani) at the beginning of His way (reshit darko)' (Proverbs 8:22, the speech of Wisdom), for 'beginning (reshit)' is wisdom: 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD' (Psalm 111:10). Sod: Chokhmah is the reshit, the 'beginning' of Genesis 1:1 (be-reshit), the point from which all unfolds (cf. § 142's reshit and the supernal point).

the third saying: the quarry of the Torah

The third saying is 'the quarry of the Torah (machtzav ha-Torah), the treasury of wisdom, the quarry of the spirit of God', the grade from which the letters of the Torah are hewn: the Holy One 'quarried all the letters of the Torah and engraved

them in the spirit, and made in it His forms.' 'There is no rock (tzur) like our God' (1 Samuel 2:2) is read 'there is no former (tzayar) like our God', the divine artist who shapes the letters. Sod: the third grade is Binah, the 'quarry' and 'treasury' (imma, the mother) from which the letters and forms of Torah are drawn (cf. the quarrying of the letters, Sefer Yetzirah 2:2).

Editorial decisions

- **Psalm 100:3 variant.** The source reads Psalm 100:3 midrashically ('He made me, and lo we, His people'), turning on the ketiv/qere of לא ('not') / לו ('to Him') to draw out the alef. Rendered as the source gives it, with the variant explained in the apparatus.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 144-146; the ten sayings, four to six

The ten sayings, four to six. The fourth is “the righteousness of the LORD and His kindnesses with all the world,” the right hand (Ḥesed); the fifth is the great fire, the left hand (Gevurah), whose hosts are the living creatures and seraphim of the chariot; and the sixth is the throne of glory, “the house of the world to come,” rooted in wisdom, “let there be light.”

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שלישי הוי רביעי מאי, רביעי הם צדקת ה׳ וזכיותיו וחסדיו עם כל	The third [is done]; what is the fourth? The fourth is the righteousness of the LORD

(tzidkat H') and His merits and His kindnesses (chasadav) with all the world; and this is the right [hand] of the Holy One.

העולם, והיינו ימינו של הקב"ה:

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חמישי מאי, חמישי אשו הגדולה של הקב"ה שנאמר (דברים י"ח ט"ז) ואת האש הגדולה הזאת לא אראה עוד ולא אמות, והיא שמאלו של הקב"ה, ומאי ניהו הם חיות הקודש והשרפים הקדושים מימינם ומשמאלם, הם הנעימים הגבוהים עד למעלה דכתיב (קהלת ה' ז) וגבוהים עליהם, ועוד (יחזקאל א, יח) וגביהן וגובה להם ויראה להם וגבותיו מלאת עינים סביב לארבעתן, וסביביו מלאכים, גם סביבותיהם משתחוים לפניהם וכורעים ואומרים ה' הוא האלהים ה' הוא האלהים:

What is the fifth? The fifth is the great fire of the Holy One, as it is said (Deuteronomy 18:16), 'and this great fire I will see no more, lest I die'; and it is the left [hand] of the Holy One. And what is it? They are the holy living creatures (chayot ha-kodesh) and the holy seraphim, on their right and on their left; they are the pleasant ones, the high ones, up to above, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 5:7), 'and high ones over them'; and moreover (Ezekiel 1:18), 'and their rims, they had height and awe, and their rims were full of eyes round about the four of them'; and around Him are angels, and around them too they bow before them and kneel and say, 'the LORD is God, the LORD is God.'

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ששי, כסא הכבוד המעוטר המוכלל המהולל המאושר, הוא בית העולם הבא, ומקומו בחכמה

The sixth: the throne of glory (kise ha-kavod), the crowned, the included, the praised, the blessed; it is the house of the world to come, and its place is in wisdom

דכתיב (בראשית א׳ ג) ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור׃

(chokhmah), as it is written (Genesis 1:3), ‘and God said, let there be light, and there was light.’

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An orientation

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the fourth saying: the right hand (Chesed)

The fourth saying is ‘the righteousness of the LORD (tzidkat H’) and His merits and His kindnesses (chasadav) with all the world’, ‘the right [hand] of the Holy One.’ Sod: the fourth grade is Chesed, the right arm, the giving grace poured on all the world (cf. Abraham’s measure, § 135); the ‘right’ against the ‘left’ of the fifth.

the fifth saying: the great fire (Gevurah)

The fifth saying is ‘the great fire (esh ha-gedolah) of the Holy One’, ‘this great fire I will see no more, lest I die’ (Deuteronomy 18:16), ‘the left [hand] of the Holy One,’ the holy living creatures (chayot) and seraphim of the chariot, ‘the high ones’ (Ecclesiastes 5:7) whose rims are ‘full of eyes round about’ (Ezekiel 1:18), crying ‘the LORD is God.’ Sod: the fifth grade is Gevurah, the left arm, dread and the consuming fire (cf. Isaac’s measure, § 135); its hosts are the merkavah’s living creatures.

the sixth saying: the throne of glory

The sixth saying is ‘the throne of glory (kise ha-kavod)’, crowned, praised, blessed, ‘the house of the world to come,’ whose ‘place is in wisdom (chokhmah)’: ‘let there be light, and there was light’ (Genesis 1:3). Sod: the throne of glory is the sixth grade (Tiferet, the seat and ‘beauty’ at the center of the tree), rooted in Chokhmah and opening the created light, the throne on which the glory is borne (cf. the sapphire throne, § 96).

Sefer ha-Bahir § 147; the two lights and the thirty-two paths

One of the book's great passages. Rabbi Yochanan reads "and there was light" as two great lights, the first of which the Holy One hid for the righteous in the world to come, the *or ha-ganuz*, too bright for any creature to gaze upon. From that hidden good He took the thirty-two paths of wisdom and gave them to this world as the Oral Torah; and the reward for keeping it is that light restored, "brightness as the light," in the age to come.

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ואמר ר' יוחנן שני אורים גדולים היו שנאמר (שם) ויהי אור, ועל שניהם נאמר כי טוב. ולקח הקב"ה האחד וגנזו לצדיקים לעתיד לבא והיינו דכתיב (תהלים ל"א כ)ז מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך פעלת לחוסים בך גו', מלמד שאור הראשון אין כל בריה יכולה להסתכל בו שנאמר (בראשית א' ד) וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב, וכתיב (שם כ"א) וירא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד, ראה הקב"ה את כל אשר עשה וראה טוב מזהיר בהיר ולוקח מאותו הטוב וכלל בו, שלשים ושתים נתיבות החכמה ונתנו לעוה"ז והיינו דכתיב (משלי ד' ב) כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתי אל תעזובו, הוי אומר זו אוצרה של תורה שבעל פה, ואמר הקב"ה אם ישמרו זאת המדה בעוה"ז שזאת המדה נחשבת בכלל העוה"ז, והיא תורה שבע"פ, יזכו לחיי העוה"ב שהוא הטוב הגנוז לצדיקים, ומאי ניהו, עוזו של הקב"ה, דכתיב (חבקוק ג' ד) ונוגה כאור תהיה, עתיד הנוגה שנלקח מן האור הראשון להיות כאור, אם יקיימו בנים התורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורותם (שמות כ"ד י"ב) דכתיב

And Rabbi Yochanan said: there were two great lights, as it is said (Genesis 1:3), 'and there was light'; and of both of them it is said, 'that it was good.' And the Holy One took the one and hid it (ganzo) for the righteous in the time to come; and this is what is written (Psalm 31:20), 'how great is Your goodness, which You have hidden for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You,' and so on. This teaches that no creature can gaze upon the first light, as it is said (Genesis 1:4), 'and God saw the light, that it was good'; and it is written (Genesis 1:31), 'and God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.' The Holy One saw all that He had made, and saw a good, shining, bright [light], and took from that good and included in it thirty-two paths of wisdom (shloshim u-shtayim netivot ha-chokhmah), and gave it to this world; and this is what is written (Proverbs 4:2), 'for I have given you a good doctrine (lekach tov); do not forsake My Torah', say: this is the treasury of the Oral Torah (Torah she-be'al peh). And the Holy One said: if they keep this measure in this world, for this measure is counted among [the things of] this world, and it is the Oral Torah, they will

ומשלי א׳ שמע בני מוסר אביך
ואל תטוש תורת אמך׃

merit the life of the world to come, which is the good hidden for the righteous. And what is it? The might of the Holy One, as it is written (Habakkuk 3:4), ‘and brightness (nogah) shall be as the light’, in the future the brightness which was taken from the first light will be as the light, if the children keep the Torah and the commandment ‘which I have written to teach them’ (Exodus 24:12), as it is written (Proverbs 1:8), ‘hear, my son, the instruction of your father, and forsake not the Torah of your mother.’

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the two lights and the hidden light

Rabbi Yochanan reads 'and there was light' (Genesis 1:3) as 'two great lights,' both called 'good.' The Holy One 'hid (ganzo)' the first for the righteous in the world to come, 'how great is Your goodness which You have hidden' (Psalm 31:20), for 'no creature can gaze upon the first light.' Sod: the primordial light (the or ha-ganuz, the hidden light of the first day, before the luminaries of the fourth) is too great for creatures and is stored up for the righteous; a central Kabbalistic doctrine, present here in the Bahir. (The verbatim Hebrew cites the 'very good' verse as Genesis 1:21; it is at 1:31.)

the thirty-two paths of wisdom and the Oral Torah

From that hidden good the Holy One 'took... and included in it thirty-two paths of wisdom (shloshim u-shtayim netivot ha-chokhmah), and gave it to this world', 'for I have given you a good doctrine (lekach tov)' (Proverbs 4:2), 'the treasury of the Oral Torah (Torah she-be'al peh).' Sod: the thirty-two paths, the ten sefirot and the twenty-two letters, the 'thirty-two wondrous paths of wisdom' by which the world was engraved (Sefer Yetzirah 1:1), are the hidden structure of the light, given to the world as the Oral Torah; keeping it merits 'the life of the world

to come,' the hidden good (cf. the thirty-two paths and the daughter, § 63).

the brightness that shall be as the light

The reward is 'the might of the Holy One': 'and brightness (nogah) shall be as the light' (Habakkuk 3:4), in the future the brightness taken from the first light will shine again as that primordial light, for those who 'keep the Torah and the commandment which I have written to teach them' (Exodus 24:12), 'the instruction of your father… the Torah of your mother' (Proverbs 1:8). Sod: the hidden light is not lost but deferred; the keeping of Torah in this world restores it in the world to come.

Editorial decisions

- **Genesis 1:31 citation.** The verse 'and God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good' is Genesis 1:31; the source cites it as Genesis 1:21 (a chaf/lamed slip, 21 for 31). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 148-150; the hidden light and the Torah

The hidden light, and the Torah. “The hiding of His might” as the concealed light, a portion of which is granted to those who keep the Torah and unify the Name (§ 148); the commandment as lamp and the Torah as light, the Oral Torah needing the Written, as a dark chamber needs a lamp even by day (§ 149); and the warning that whoever studies the account of creation and the account of the chariot cannot but stumble, yet by enduring the reproofs attains the way of life (§ 150).

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וכתיב (חבקוק שם) קרנים מידו לו ושם חביון עוזו, מאי חביון עוזו, אלא אותו האור שגנז והחביא שנאמר (תהלים ל"א ב) אשר צפנת ליראיך, וזה שנשאר לנו (שם) פעלת לחוסים בך, אותם שחוסים בצלך בעוה"ז ושומרים תורתך ומקיימים מצותיך ומקדשים שמך הגדול ומיחדים בסתר ובגלוי שנאמר (שם) נגד בני אדם:

And it is written (Habakkuk 3:4), 'rays from His hand to Him, and there is the hiding of His might (chevyon uzo).' What is 'the hiding of His might'? Rather, that light which He hid and concealed, as it is said (Psalm 31:20), 'which You have hidden for those who fear You'; and this that remained for us (ibid.), 'You have wrought for those who take refuge in You': those who take refuge in Your shadow in this world, and keep Your Torah, and fulfill Your commandments, and sanctify Your great Name, and unify [it] in secret and in the open, as it is said (ibid.), 'before the sons of man.'

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אמר רבי רחומאי מלמד שהיא אורה לישראל ותורה אורה דכתיב (משלי ו' ג) כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, ואמרינן נר זו מצוה ואורה זו תורה שבעל פה, ואור זו תורה שבכתב אלא מתוך שכבר מתקיים האור קרי ליה אור, משל למה"ד לחדר צנוע בסופו של

Rabbi Rechumai said: it teaches that it is light to Israel, and Torah is light, as it is written (Proverbs 6:23), 'for the commandment is a lamp (ner) and the Torah is light (or)'; and we say: the lamp (ner), this is the commandment (mitzvah); and the light (orah), this is the Oral Torah; and the light (or), this is the Written Torah. But

since the light is already established, it is called ‘light.’ A parable: to what is it comparable? To a hidden chamber at the end of the house, although it is day and there is great light in the world, no one sees in that chamber unless he brings a lamp into it; so [it is with] the Oral Torah: although it is light, it needs the Written Torah to resolve its difficulties and to explain its secrets.

הבית אע”פ שיום הוא ואור גדול בעולם אין אדם רואה באותו החדר אלא אם כן הכניס בו נר, כך תורה שבעל פה אע”פ שהוא אור צריכה היא לתורה שבכתב לפרק קושיותיה ולבאר סודותיה. נא:

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Rabbi Rechumai said: what is written (Proverbs 6:23), ‘and the way of life is the reproofs of instruction (tochachot musar)’? It teaches that whoever is engaged in the account of creation (ma’aseh bereshit) and the account of the chariot (ma’aseh merkavah), it is impossible that he not stumble, as it is said (Isaiah 3:6), ‘and let this ruin be under your hand’: things upon which a person cannot stand unless he has stumbled in them; and the Torah says ‘the reproofs of instruction,’ but in truth he merits the way of life. Therefore, whoever wishes to merit the way of life

אמר רבי רחומאי מאי דכתיב (משלי ו’ כ”ג) ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר, מלמד שכל הרגיל במעשה בראשית ובמעשי מרכבה אי אפשר שלא יכשל שנאמר (ישעי’ ג’ ו) והמכשלה הזאת תחת ידך. דברים שאין אדם יכול לעמוד בהן אלא אם כן נכשל בהן והתורה אומרת תוכחת מוסר, אבל באמת זוכה לדרך חיים, לפיכך מי שרוצה לזכות בדרך חיים יסבול תוכחות מוסר:

should endure the reproofs of instruction.

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the hiding of His might

’The hiding of His might (chevyon uzo)’ (Habakkuk 3:4) is ‘that light which He hid and concealed’ (Psalm 31:20, continuing § 147’s hidden light). What ‘remained for us’ is ‘wrought for those who take refuge in You’, those who keep the Torah, fulfill the commandments, sanctify the Name, and ‘unify [it] in secret and in the open, before the sons of man.’ Sod: the or ha-ganuz is the hidden ‘might’; a portion is granted in this world to those who serve and unify the Name openly and in secret.

the lamp, the Oral Torah, and the Written Torah

'For the commandment is a lamp (ner) and the Torah is light (or)' (Proverbs 6:23): the lamp is the commandment; the 'light (orah)' is the Oral Torah; the 'light (or)' is the Written Torah. A parable: a hidden chamber at the end of the house cannot be seen, even in full day, without bringing a lamp in, so the Oral Torah, though itself light, 'needs the Written Torah to resolve its difficulties and explain its secrets.' Sod: the Written and Oral Torah are two lights that require each other; the Oral illumines the hidden places the Written cannot reach alone (cf. the two lights, § 147).

the account of creation and the chariot: the reproofs of instruction

'The way of life is the reproofs of instruction (tochachot musar)' (Proverbs 6:23): whoever studies 'the account of creation (ma'aseh bereshit)' and 'the account of the chariot (ma'aseh merkavah)', the two great esoteric disciplines, 'cannot but stumble' (Isaiah 3:6, 'let this ruin be under your hand'), for these are 'things a person cannot stand upon unless he has stumbled in them.' The stumbling is the 'reproof,' but 'in truth he merits the way of life.' Sod: the deepest study is inseparable from error and correction; one attains 'the way of life' only by enduring the reproofs the esoteric path exacts.

Editorial decisions

- **Psalm 31:20 citation.** The verse ‘which You have hidden for those who fear You’ is Psalm 31:20; the source cites it as Psalm 31:2 (a dropped digit). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.
- **Proverbs 6:23 citation.** ‘For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light’ is Proverbs 6:23; the source cites it as Proverbs 6:3 (a dropped digit). The correct locus is confirmed by section 150, which cites the same verse (6:23) correctly for the next clause. Rendered at 6:23 with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 151-152; suffering with love, the crown and the throne

From study to its cost and its crown. “Life” as the Torah, won by bearing the yoke of the commandments and receiving suffering with love, saying over all that God’s judgments are just (§ 151); and the “throne” as the crown of the Holy One and the three crowns of Israel, the beloved vessel worn as the tefillin of the head, bound on the arm, lent to the son, called by turns a throne (§ 152).

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Another interpretation: 'life' is Torah, as it is said (Deuteronomy 30:19), 'and you shall choose life,' and it is written (ibid. 20), 'for it is your life and the length of your days.' And whoever wishes to merit it should despise the pleasure of the body and bear the yoke of the commandments; and if sufferings (yisurim) come upon him, he should accept them with love, and not say, 'since I do the will of my Maker and study Torah every day, why do the sufferings come upon me?': rather, he should accept them with love; and then he will merit the complete way of life. For who knows the mind of the Holy One? And he is bound to say over everything, 'You are righteous, O LORD, and Your judgments are upright' (Psalm 119:137), and 'all that they do from Heaven is for the good.'

ד"א חיים זו תורה שנאמר (דברים ל, יט) ובחרת בחיים, וכתיב (שם כ') כי היא חייך ואורך ימיך, ומי שרוצה לזכות בה ימאס בהנאת הגוף ויסבל עול מצות, ואם באו עליו יסורים יקבלם מאהבה, ואל יאמר הואיל ואני מקיים רצון קוני ואני לומד תורה בכל יום למה באין עלי היסורין, אלא יקבלם מאהבה, ואז יזכה לדרך חיים שלימה, כי מי יודע דעת הקב"ה, וחייב לומר על הכל צדיק אתה ה' וישר משפטיך (תהלים קי"ט קלז), וכל דעבדין מן שמיא לטב:

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You said 'His throne'; but we said this is the crown (keter) of the Holy One, as we said: 'with three crowns Israel were crowned, the crown of priesthood, and the

אמרת כסאו, והא אמרינן זה כתרו של הקב"ה, כדאמרינן בשלשה כתרים נכתרו ישראל כתר כהונה וכתר מלכות וכתר תורה על

crown of kingship, and the crown of Torah above them.' A parable: to a king who had a fine, fragrant vessel that he loved greatly; sometimes he set it upon his head, and this is the tefillin of the head; sometimes he took it upon his arm, in the knot of the tefillin of the arm; sometimes he lends it to his son to sit with him; sometimes it is called his throne, for upon his arm he bears it like an amulet, like a throne.

גביהם. משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו כלי נאה ומבושם ואוהבו מאד, לפעמים שמו בראשו והיינו תפלין שבראש, לפעמים נטלו בזרועו בקשר תפלין של זרוע, לפעמים משאילו לבנו לשבת עמו. לפעמים נקרא כסאו כי בזרועו נושאו כקמיע כעין כסא:

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life is Torah, and suffering received with love

’Life’ is the Torah, ‘choose life’ (Deuteronomy 30:19), ‘for it is your life’ (30:20). To merit it one must ‘despise the pleasure of

the body,' bear 'the yoke of the commandments,' and receive suffering (yisurim) 'with love,' not protesting 'why do sufferings come upon me though I serve and study.' 'Who knows the mind of the Holy One?', one must say over all, 'You are righteous, O LORD, and Your judgments are upright' (Psalm 119:137), 'all that they do from Heaven is for the good.' Sod: the classic doctrine of yisurin shel ahavah (chastisements of love, Berakhot 5a); the 'complete way of life' (§ 150) is won by accepting the divine judgment as just and good.

the crown, the throne, and the tefillin

The 'throne' is here 'the crown (keter) of the Holy One', and the three crowns of Israel (priesthood, kingship, Torah, Avot 4:13). A parable: a beloved vessel set sometimes on the head (the tefillin of the head), sometimes on the arm (the tefillin of the arm), sometimes lent to the son, sometimes called 'his throne,' borne on the arm 'like an amulet (kame'a), like a throne.' Sod: the one grade is crown, throne, and adornment by turns, Keter worn as the tefillin of the head, the arm-tefillin bound below, the 'son' (Tiferet) seated with it; the wordplay kame'a / kise (amulet / throne) binds the crown to the seat of glory.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 153-154; the seventh, the heaven and the holy palace

The seventh saying, named twice. As heaven (*shamayim*) it stands in the middle, bearing water and fire and making peace between them (§ 153); yet it "is nothing but the sixth," for here is the holy palace (*heikhal ha-kodesh*) that bears all the grades and, counted as two, becomes the seventh, the boundless thought that has no end and no limit (§ 154).

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ומאי שביעי, היא ערבות שמים ולמה נקרא שמים אלא שהוא עגול כמו ראש, ומלמד שמים מימינו ואש משמאלו והוא באמצע, והוא שא מים מאש וממים, ומכניס שלום ביניהם, בא האש ומצא צדו מדת אש, ובאו המים ומצאו מצדן מדת המים, והיינו עושה שלום במרומיו (איוב כ"ה ב):

And what is the seventh? It is aravot, heaven (shamayim). And why is it called shamayim? Because it is round like a head. And it teaches: water (mayim) on its right and fire (esh) on its left, and it is in the middle; and it is 'sha mayim': it bears water, from fire and from water, and brings peace between them. The fire comes and finds on its side the measure of fire, and the water comes and finds on its side the measure of water; and this is 'He makes peace in His heights' (Job 25:2).

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שביעי אינו אלא ששי, אלא מלמד שכאן היכל הקודש והוא נושא את כולם ונחשב לשנים, והוי שביעי, ומאי הוא, המחשבה שאין לה סוף ותכלית, וכך המקום הזה אין לו סוף ותכלית:

The seventh is nothing but the sixth; rather, it teaches that here is the holy palace (heikhal ha-kodesh), and it bears all of them, and is counted as two, and so it is the seventh. And what is it? The thought (machashavah) that has no end and no limit; and so this place has no end and no limit.

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the seventh: heaven, fire and water, and peace

The seventh is ‘aravot’ (the highest of the seven heavens), called ‘heaven (shamayim),’ ‘round like a head.’ The name is read as a fusion: shamayim = esh (fire) and mayim (water), or ‘sha mayim,’ bearing water, the grade in the middle that ‘bears water from fire and from water’ and ‘brings peace between them,’ so that fire finds its measure and water finds its measure: ‘He makes peace in His heights’ (Job 25:2). Sod: the central grade (Tiferet) holds fire (Gevurah, the left) and water (Chesed, the right) in balance, ‘heaven’ as the reconciliation of the two arms (cf. the classic midrash, shamayim from esh + mayim).

the seventh as the holy palace: thought without end

The seventh ‘is nothing but the sixth’, for ‘here is the holy palace (heikhal ha-kodesh), which bears all of them and is counted as two,’ and so becomes the seventh. And what is it? ‘The thought

(machashavah) that has no end and no limit; and so this place has no end and no limit.' Sod: the heikhal ha-kodesh, the supernal palace of the divine thought (cf. sections 70, 88, 117, the site's own namesake), is boundless; borne above the six directions, it is counted as their center and their crown, at once the sixth and, doubled, the seventh: the limitless thought in which all is held.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 155-156; the east and the west, the seed and the gathering

The seventh grade as east and west, seed and gathering. The east from which "the seed of Israel" comes, new seed if Israel are worthy, else the seed that already came (§ 155); and the west, called *ma'arav* because "there all the seed is mixed," the modest bride who stores the wealth and yields it at the end: "from the east he sows in the west, and afterward gathers what he sows" (§ 156).

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שביעי הוי מזרחו של עולם, ומשם בא זרעם של ישראל, כי חוט השדרה משוך מן המח של אדם, ובא לאמה ומשם הוא הזרע, דכתיב (ישעי' מ"ג ה) ממזרח אביא זרעך, כשישראל טובים מזה המקום אביא זרעך, ויתחדש לך זרע חדש, וכשישראל רעים מן הזרע שכבר בא לעולם שנאמר (קהלת א' ד) דור הולך ודור בא, מלמד שכבר בא:

The seventh is the east of the world, and from there comes the seed of Israel; for the spinal cord (chut ha-shidrah) is drawn from the brain (moach) of man and comes to the member, and from there is the seed, as it is written (Isaiah 43:5), 'from the east I will bring your seed', when Israel are good, from this place I bring your seed, and a new seed is renewed for you; and when Israel are evil, [it comes] from the seed that has already come into the world, as it is said (Ecclesiastes 1:4), 'a generation goes and a generation comes,' teaching that it has already come.

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ומאי דכתיב (ישעי' מ"ג ה) ממערב אקבצך, מאותה המדה שנוטה תמיד למערב, למה איקרי מערב מפני ששם מתערב כל הזרע, משל למה"ד לבן מלך, שהיה לו כלה נאה וצנועה בחדרו, והיה לוקח מבית אביו עושר ומביא לה תמיד, ולוקחת הכל ומצנעת אותו תמיד ומערבת הכל, לסוף ימים בקש לראות מה אסף

And what is [the meaning of] what is written (Isaiah 43:5), 'and from the west I will gather you'? From that measure that always inclines to the west. Why is it called ma'arav (west)? Because there all the seed is mixed (mit'arev). A parable: to a king's son who had a fine and modest bride in his chamber, and he would take wealth from his father's house and always bring it to her; and she takes it all and

ומה קיבץ, והיינו דכתיב וממערב אקבצך, ומאי ניהו, בית אביו, דכתיב ממזרח אביא זרעיך מלמד שממזרח מביא וזורע במערב ואחר כך הוא מקבץ מה שזורע:

always stores it away and mixes it all together. At the end of days he wished to see what she had gathered and what she had collected; and this is what is written, ‘and from the west I will gather you.’ And what is it? His father’s house, as it is written, ‘from the east I will bring your seed’: teaching that from the east he brings and sows in the west, and afterward he gathers what he sows.

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the east: the seed of Israel

The seventh ‘is the east’ from which ‘the seed of Israel’ comes: as in the body ‘the spinal cord is drawn from the brain and comes to the member,’ so ‘from the east I will bring your seed’ (Isaiah 43:5). When Israel are worthy, ‘a new seed is renewed’; when not, it comes ‘from the seed that already came into the world’, ‘a

generation goes and a generation comes' (Ecclesiastes 1:4), the returning generation of the transmigration (cf. §§ 121-122). Sod: the east is the generative grade (Yesod, the tzaddik and foundation), the channel through which the seed / flow descends from the brain (the supernal grades) to the world.

the west: the bride who gathers the seed

'And from the west I will gather you' (Isaiah 43:5) is 'the measure that always inclines to the west,' called ma'arav because 'there all the seed is mixed (mit'arev).' A parable: a king's son brings his father's wealth to his modest bride, who 'stores it and mixes it all,' until at the end he 'gathers what he sows.' Sod: the west is the receiving grade, the Shekhinah / Malkhut, the bride who gathers and stores the seed (the flow) sown from the east (Yesod), and yields it up in the end; the divine feminine as the treasury of all that the masculine grade sends down (cf. the king's daughter, §§ 54, 132).

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 157-158; the eighth, the righteous one

The eighth grade as the righteous one, Yesod, the foundation. The one tzaddik who sustains the world, “the foundation of all the souls,” beloved and awesome above and below, counted also as the seventh because it decides between the six (§ 157); and it is the seventh because the Holy One rested on the Sabbath in that measure, the grade that completes the six days’ works and enlarges the soul (§ 158).

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שמיני מאי הוי, יש לו להקב"ה צדיק אחד בעולמו והוא חביב לו מפני שמקיים כל העולם כולו והוא יסודו, והוא מכלכלו והוא מצמחו ומגדלו ומשמרו, אהוב וחביב למעלה, אהוב וחביב למטה, נורא ואדיר למעלה, נורא ואדיר למטה, ומתוקן ומקובל למעלה, מתוקן ומקובל למטה, והוא יסוד הנפשות כולן, ואמרת שמיני, ואמרת יסוד הנפשות כולן והכתיב (שמות ל"א יז) וביום השביעי שבת וינפש, אין שביעי הוי, משום דמכריע ביניהו, דשית אינון תלת מלרע ותלת מלעיל והוא דאכרע ביניהו:

What is the eighth? The Holy One has one righteous one (tzaddik) in His world, and He loves him, because he sustains the whole world, and he is its foundation (yesod); he nourishes it, and makes it grow, and rears it, and guards it: beloved and dear above, beloved and dear below; awesome and mighty above, awesome and mighty below; established and accepted above, established and accepted below. And he is the foundation of all the souls. You said 'the eighth,' and you said 'the foundation of all the souls'; but is it not written (Exodus 31:17), 'and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed'? Is it not the seventh? Because it decides between them, for the six, three are below and three are above, and it is the one that decides between them.

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ומ"ט אקרי שביעי וכי היה בשביעי, לא, אלא מפני שהקב"ה שבת בשבת, באותה המדה דכתיב (שם) כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ וביום השביעי

And why is it called the seventh? And was it [made] on the seventh? No; rather, because the Holy One rested on the Sabbath in that measure, as it is written (ibid.), 'for in six days the LORD made the

שבת וינפש, מלמד שכל יום ויום יש לו מאמר שהוא אדון לו לא מפני שהוא נברא בו אלא מפני שהוא פועל בו פעולה המסורה בידו פעלו כולם פעולתם וקיימו מעשיהם, לכך בא יום השביעי ופעל פעולתו ושמחו כולם, אף הקב"ה, ולא עוד אלא שגדלה נשמתן דכתיב וביום השביעי שבת וינפש:

heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' This teaches that each and every day has a saying (ma'amar) that is its lord, not because it was created on it, but because it performs in it an action given into its hand; they all performed their action and established their works; therefore the seventh day came and performed its action, and they all rejoiced, even the Holy One; and moreover, their soul was enlarged, as it is written, 'and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed (va-yinafash).'

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the eighth: the righteous one, the foundation of all souls

The eighth is 'one righteous one (tzaddik)' whom the Holy One loves, 'because he sustains the whole world and is its foundation (yesod)', nourishing, rearing, guarding it; 'beloved and dear, awesome and mighty, established and accepted' above and below alike; 'the foundation of all the souls.' Sod: this is Yesod, the ninth sefirah, the tzaddik yesod olam (the righteous, foundation of the world, Proverbs 10:25), the channel through which the flow and the souls pass to Malkhut / the Shekhinah (see the Tzaddik / Yesod of the lexicon). Though called 'the eighth,' it is also 'the seventh' because it 'decides between' the six directions, three above and three below, the balancing center-below.

why the seventh: the Sabbath and the enlarged soul

It is called 'the seventh' not because it was made then, but because 'the Holy One rested on the Sabbath in that measure', 'in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed' (Exodus 31:17). Each day has 'a saying (ma'amar) that is its lord,' performing 'an action given into its hand'; when the works were all established, 'the seventh day came and performed its action, and all rejoiced,

even the Holy One,' and 'their soul was enlarged': va-yinafash, from nefesh (soul). Sod: the Sabbath grade gathers and completes the six days' works, and its rest is an increase of soul, not a cessation (cf. va-yinafash and the added soul of the Sabbath, § 58).

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 159-160; the seven gardens and the world to come

The Sabbath and the world to come. The rest as a king's seven gardens with a spring from the source of life in the middle, watering the heart, and the heart watering all the rest (§ 159); and "the world to come" read as "the world that comes", the great light that arose in thought before creation, a seventh given and the rest hidden for the righteous, already come before the six days (§ 160).

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ומה הוי שביתה זו דלית בה מלאכה והוי הנחה דכתיב שבת, משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו שבעה גנות ובגן האמצעי מעין נובע ממקור חיים, ג' מימינו וג' משמאלו, ומיד שפועל פעולה זו או מתמלא שמחים כולם, כי אמרו לצרכינו הוא מתמלא, והוא משקה אותן ומגדלן והם ממתינין ושובתין והוא משקה את השבעה, והכתיב (ישעי' מ"ג ה) ממזרח אביא זרעך והוי חד מנהון ומשקה ליה, אלא אימא הוא משקה את הלב והלב משקה אח"כ את כולם:

And what is this rest, in which there is no work, and it is a repose, as it is written 'Sabbath'? A parable: to a king who had seven gardens, and in the middle garden a spring flowing from the source of life (mekor chayim), three on its right and three on its left; and as soon as it performs this action, or is filled, they all rejoice, for they said, 'for our need it is filled.' And it waters them and makes them grow, and they wait and rest, and it waters the seven. But is it not written (Isaiah 43:5), 'from the east I will bring your seed', and it is one of them, and it waters it? Rather say: it waters the heart (lev), and the heart afterward waters them all.

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ישב ר' ברכיה ודרש מאי האי דאמרינן כל יומא העולם הבא, ולא ידעינן מאי קאמרינן, העוה"ב מתרגמינן עלמא דאתי, מאי עלמא דאתי, מלמד שקודם שנברא העולם עלה במחשבה לבראות אור גדול להאיר, ונברא אור גדול שאין כל בריה יכולה לשלוט בו,

Rabbi Berechiah sat and expounded: what is this that we say every day, 'the world to come,' and we do not know what we are saying? 'The world to come' we render 'the world that comes (alma de-atei)'; what is 'the world that comes'? It teaches that before the world was created, it arose in

צפה הקב"ה שאין יכולין לסובלו, לקח שביעית ושם להם במקומו והשאר גנזו לצדיקים לעתיר לבוא, ואמר אם יזכו בזה השביעי וישמרוה אתן להם זה לעולם אחרון והיינו עולם הבא שכבר בא מקודם ששת ימי בראשית הה"ד (תהלים ל"א כ) מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך וגו':

thought (machashavah) to create a great light to give light; and a great light was created that no creature could master. The Holy One foresaw that they could not bear it; He took a seventh of it and set it in its place for them, and the rest He hid for the righteous in the time to come. And He said: if they merit this seventh and keep it, I will give them this in the last world; and this is the world to come, which already came before the six days of creation; and this is what is written (Psalm 31:20), 'how great is Your goodness which You have hidden for those who fear You,' and so on.

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the seven gardens and the spring that waters the heart

The Sabbath rest is figured as a king's seven gardens, with a spring 'flowing from the source of life (mekor chayim)' in the middle garden, 'three on its right and three on its left.' When it is filled, all rejoice, and it 'waters the seven.' But since one of the seven is itself the source (Isaiah 43:5, 'from the east I will bring your seed'), the resolution is: 'it waters the heart (lev), and the heart afterward waters them all.' Sod: the central grade (the heart, Tiferet, or Yesod as the spring) receives the flow from the source and distributes it to the six directions / seven grades; the middle waters all (cf. the uniting holy, §§ 129, 159).

the world to come: the hidden light that already came

Rabbi Berechiah reads 'the world to come (ha-olam ha-ba)' through its Targum, 'the world that comes (alma de-atei).' Before creation 'it arose in thought (machashavah) to create a great light'; but the light was too great to bear, so the Holy One 'took a seventh and set it in its place' and 'hid the rest for the righteous in the time to come' (Psalm 31:20). Sod: the world to come is not merely future, it 'already came before the six days of creation,' the primordial hidden light (or ha-ganuz, cf. §§ 147-

148); a seventh is given to this world, and the whole is kept for those who merit it. ‘The world that comes’ is the ever-present source, not only the age ahead.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 161; the bitter waters and the tree of life

The Bahir's fullest narrative of evil, read into the bitter waters of Marah. The north wind mixed into the waters; the Adversary removing the tree of life to accuse Israel; Moses' cry restoring it, and the tree cast in sweetening the waters; and the Holy One setting a statute upon the Adversary that diminished him, so that evil, though real, is bounded, and the tree of life is what sweetens the bitter (§ 161).

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What is written (Exodus 15:27), ‘and they came to Elim, and there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there by the waters’? And what praise was there in seventy palm trees? In one of the smallest of places there are a thousand! Rather, they merited [something] corresponding to them, and there is a parable for them in the palms. As it is written, ‘and they came to Marah, and they could not drink water from Marah, for it was bitter’, this teaches that the north wind was mixed in, as it is said (ibid. 25), ‘and he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree, and he cast it into the water, and the water became sweet.’ Immediately the Holy One put His hand upon the Adversary and diminished him; and had it not been so, Israel could not have stood before him, as it is written (ibid.), ‘there He made for him a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested him.’ This teaches that at that hour the Adversary clung to them, in order to destroy them from the world, as it is written (ibid. 24), ‘and the people murmured against Moses, saying, what shall we drink?’ And moreover he accused Moses, until he cried to the LORD and was answered. And what is ‘and the LORD showed him a tree’? This

מאי דכתיב (שמות ט"ו כז) ויבואו אלימה ושם שתים עשרה עינות מים ושבעים תמרים ויחנו שם על המים, וכי מה שבח היה בשבעים תמרים, באחת מקטני המקומות יש אלף, אלא זכו לדוגמתם ויש להם משל בתמרים דכתיב ויבואו מרתה ולא יכלו לשתות מים ממרה כי מרים הם, מלמד שרוח צפונית היתה מעורבבת שנאמר (שם כ"ה) ויצעק אל ה' ויורהו ה' עץ וישלך אל המים וימתקו המים, מיד נתן הקב"ה ידו בשטן ומיעטו, ואילמלא כך לא יכלו ישראל לעמוד מפניו דכתיב (שם) שם שם לו חוק ומשפט ושם נסהו, מלמד שבאותה שעה דבק השטן בהם כדי לאבדם מן העולם דכתיב (שם כ"ד) וילונו העם על משה לאמר מה נשתה, ועוד קטרג על משה עד כי צעק אל ה' ונענה, ומאי ויורהו ה' עץ, מלמד שעץ החיים היה סביב המים ובא השטן ונטלו משם כדי לקטרג על ישראל ולהחטיאם לאביהם שבשמים, והיה אומר להם עתה תכנסו במדבר ועדיין אלה המים שהם מרים הם טובים כי תסתפקו מהם, אבל במדבר לא תמצאו אפילו לרחוץ ידיכם ופניכם, ותמותו ברעב ובצמא בעירום ובחוסר כל, באו אל משה ואמרו לו כך וכך,

דחה אותם, ראה כי לא יכול להם התחזק על ישראל ועל משה ובאו העם וילונו על משה כאן חסרים לנו מים ומה נשתה במדבר, בא השטן וזייף דבריהם אל משה כדי להחטיאם, ומיד כשראה משה השטן ויצעק אל ה' ויורהו ה' עץ, אותו עץ החיים היה שהסיר השטן, וישלך אל המים וימתקו המים, שם שם לו הקב"ה לשטן חק ומשפט, ושם נסהו לישראל, ובא הקב"ה להזהיר את ישראל ויאמר אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלהיך וגו':

teaches that the tree of life was around the waters, and the Adversary came and took it from there, in order to accuse Israel and cause them to sin against their Father in heaven; and he would say to them: now you will enter the wilderness, and even these waters, which are bitter, are good, for you will supply yourselves from them; but in the wilderness you will not find even [enough] to wash your hands and your face, and you will die of hunger and of thirst, naked and lacking everything. They came to Moses and said to him thus and thus; he pushed them away. He saw that he could not prevail against them, [and] strengthened himself against Israel and against Moses; and the people came and murmured against Moses: here we lack water, and what shall we drink in the wilderness? The Adversary came and falsified their words to Moses, in order to make them sin. And immediately, when Moses saw the Adversary, 'and he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree', it was that tree of life that the Adversary had removed, 'and he cast it into the water, and the water became sweet.' 'There He made for him', the Holy One [set] for the Adversary 'a statute and an ordinance,' 'and there He tested' Israel; and the Holy One came to warn Israel, and said, 'if

you will diligently hearken to the
voice of the LORD your God,'
and so on.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the bitter waters, the tree of life, and the Adversary

The seventy palm trees and twelve springs of Elim (Exodus 15:27) are read against the bitter waters of Marah just before (Exodus 15:23-25). ‘The north wind was mixed in’ the waters, the north being the side of severity and evil (see § 162 and the Gevurah of the lexicon). The ‘Adversary’ (ha-satan) had removed ‘the tree of life’ that stood around the waters, to accuse Israel and drive them to sin; Moses’ cry brought the tree back, and casting it in sweetened the waters. ‘There He made for him a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested him’ (Exodus

15:25) is read doubly: the Holy One set a limit (a 'statute') upon the Adversary and diminished him, and 'tested' Israel. Sod: evil, figured as the Adversary drawing on the northern side (Din / Gevurah unbalanced), is real but bounded, placed under a divine statute, and the tree of life restored is what sweetens the bitter (cf. the consuming fire and the root of severity, §§ 135, 145).

Editorial decisions

- **ha-satan rendered 'the Adversary'.** The Hebrew ha-satan is rendered 'the Adversary' throughout, not the loanword 'Satan.' The Bahir treats it as a bounded accusing power that draws on the northern (severe) side, identified in the following sections (162-164) with the measure 'evil' and the yetzer ha-ra: not as a dualistic rival to God.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 162-163; the adversary and the evil inclination

The doctrine of evil. The king's daughter guarded from her enemies by staying within and never sitting idle (§ 162); and the Adversary as "a measure whose name is evil" on the north, the form of a hand with messengers all named evil, rooted in the tohu of the north, the source of every evil inclination, kept to the left where alone it has authority (§ 163).

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משל למה"ד למלך שהיתה לו בת נאה ואחרים מתאוים לה, ידע המלך בדבר ולא היה יכול להתקוטט עם המוציאים בתו לתרבות רעה, בא לביתו והזהירה, אמר לה בתי אל תחושו לדברי אלה האויבים ולא יוכלו לך, ואל תצאי לפתח הבית ועשי מלאכתך בביתך ואל תשבי בטלה אפילו שעה אחת, ולא יוכלו לראותך ולא להזיק לך, כי יש בהם מדה אחת מתרחקים משל דרך טוב ובוחרים בכל דרך רע, וכשרואין איש מדריך עצמו בדרך טובה והולך בה שונאים אותו, ומאי ניהו השטן, מלמד שיש להקב"ה מדה ששמה רעה והיא לצפונו של הקב"ה דכתיב (ירמי' א' יד) מצפון תפתח הרעה על כל יושבי הארץ, כלומר כל רעה אשר היא באה לכל יושבי הארץ מצפון היא באה:

A parable: to what is it comparable? To a king who had a fine daughter, and others desired her; the king knew of the matter, and could not contend with those who would lead his daughter into evil ways. He came to his house and warned her; he said to her: my daughter, do not heed the words of these enemies, and they will not be able [to harm] you; and do not go out to the door of the house, and do your work within your house, and do not sit idle even one hour, and they will not be able to see you or to harm you. For there is in them one measure, they keep far from the good way and choose every evil way; and when they see a man directing himself in a good way and walking in it, they hate him. And what is it? The Adversary. This teaches that the Holy One has a measure whose name is 'evil,' and it is to the north of the Holy One, as it is written (Jeremiah 1:14), 'from the north the evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth', that is to say, all evil that comes upon all the inhabitants of the earth comes from the north.

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ומאי ניהו מדה אחת, היא צורת יד ולה שליחים הרבה ושמם של כולם רע רע, אך יש בהם קטן וגדול, והם מחייבים את העולם, כי תהו לצד צפון, ואין תהו אלא רע המתהא את העולם עד שיחטיאם, וכל יצה"ר שיש באדם משם הוא בא, ולמה ניתן בשמאל, מפני שאין לו רשות בכל העולם אלא בצפון, ולא הורגל אלא בצפון, ולא רצה להיות אלא בצפון, לפי כשיהיה בדרום עד שילמד מהלך הדרום והאיך יכול להטעות יתעכב אותן ימים שילמוד ולא יחטיא. לפיכך הוא לעולם בצפון בשמאל והיינו דכתיב (בראשית ח' כא) כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו, רע הוא מנעוריו ולא יטה אלא לשמאל שכבר הורגל בה, לפום הכי אמר הקב"ה לישראל (שמות ט"ו כו) אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלהיך והישר בעיניו תעשה והאזנת למצותיו, ולא למצות יצה"ר, ושמרת כל חוקיו, ולא חקות יצה"ר, אני ה' רופאיך:

And what is that one measure? It is the form of a hand, and it has many messengers, and the name of all of them is 'evil, evil'; but among them there are small and great, and they condemn the world, for chaos (tohu) is to the north side; and chaos is nothing but the evil that confounds the world until it makes them sin. And every evil inclination (yetzer ha-ra) that is in man comes from there. And why was it placed on the left? Because it has no authority in all the world except in the north, and it is not accustomed except to the north, and it did not wish to be except in the north; for when it would be in the south, until it learns the way of the south and how it can lead astray, it would be delayed those days in which it learns, and it would not cause [anyone] to sin. Therefore it is always in the north, on the left. And this is what is written (Genesis 8:21), 'for the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth', it is evil from his youth, and it inclines only to the left, for it is already accustomed to it. Therefore the Holy One said to Israel (Exodus 15:26), 'if you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His eyes, and give ear to His commandments', and not to

the commandments of the evil inclination, ‘and keep all His statutes’, and not the statutes of the evil inclination: ‘I am the LORD your healer.’

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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the daughter guarded from her enemies

A king warns his desirable daughter to stay within, do her work, and never sit idle, so her enemies ‘cannot see or harm’ her, for there is in those enemies ‘one measure’ that flees the good and ‘hates’ whoever walks in it. Sod: the daughter is the Shekhinah / the soul, guarded from the accusing powers by staying occupied in the good (never idle); the enemies are the forces of the ‘other side’ that cannot reach one who keeps to the way (cf. the king’s daughter, §§ 54, 132).

the measure called 'evil': the north and the evil inclination

The Adversary is 'a measure whose name is evil,' set 'to the north of the Holy One', 'from the north the evil shall break forth' (Jeremiah 1:14). It is 'the form of a hand' with many messengers all named 'evil,' rooted in the tohu (chaos) of the north, 'the evil that confounds the world until it makes them sin'; 'every evil inclination (yetzer ha-ra) in man comes from there.' It keeps to the left because it 'has authority only in the north.' 'The inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth' (Genesis 8:21), so the warning: hearken to God's commandments 'and not the commandments of the evil inclination' (Exodus 15:26). Sod: evil is located on the northern / left side (unbalanced Din / Gevurah), the root of the yetzer ha-ra, real, but a bounded 'measure' within the divine order, not an independent power (see the Gevurah theodicy of the lexicon, and §§ 135, 161).

Editorial decisions

- **ha-satan rendered 'the Adversary'.** As in section 161, ha-satan is rendered 'the Adversary,' and it is identified here explicitly with the measure 'evil' and the source of the yetzer ha-ra (the evil inclination) on the northern side: a bounded measure within the divine order, not a dualistic rival.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 164-165; the jealous steward and the Torah as water

The Adversary's mechanism, and Elim. The jealous steward of the stone-treasury who destroys the weak houses to draw all to himself, and the name "Adversary" derived from "turning aside," for he tilts the world toward guilt (§ 164); and the seventy palms merited by accepting the commandments, the twelve springs "returned as stones," the Torah first like water and then fixed in place (§ 165).

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ומאי מרויח יצה"ר, משל למה"ד למלך שהפקיד פקידים על מדינות מלכותו ועל מלאכתו ועל סחורתו, ועל כל אחד ואחד ממונה, על אוצרות המאכל הטוב, ואחד ממונה על אוצר האבנים, באו כל העולם לקנות מאוצרות מאכל הטוב, בא זה שממונה על אוצר האבנים וראה מה שקונין ממנו קנא, מה עשה, שלח שלוחיו להרוס הבתים החלשים, כי בחזקים לא יוכלו, אמר בין כך ובין כך שישתדלו להרוס בית אחד מן החזקים יהרסו עשרים מן החלשים ויבואו כולם ויבנו אבנים ממני ולא אהיה אני פחות מחבירי, הה"ד (ירמי' א' יד) מצפון תפתח הרעה על כל יושבי הארץ, ואח"כ (שם ט"ו) כי הנני קורא לכל משפחות ממלכות צפונה נאום ה' ובאו ונתנו איש כסאו פתח שערי ירושלם וגו', והרעה יהיה להם עסק, ושם יצה"ר ישתדל תמיד, ומאי משמע, דשטן לישנא דמטה הוא, שהוא מטה את כל העולם לכף חובה, וכתיב (בראשית ל', ח טז) ויט אליה אל הדרך ומתרגם וסטה לותה, וכתיב (משלי ד טו) שטה מעליו ועבור:

And what does the evil inclination gain? A parable: to a king who appointed officials over the provinces of his kingdom, and over his work, and over his merchandise, and over each and every one an appointee: over the treasuries of good food, and one appointed over the treasury of stones. All the world came to buy from the treasuries of good food. This one who was appointed over the treasury of stones came and saw what they buy [from the others], and was jealous. What did he do? He sent his messengers to demolish the weak houses, for against the strong ones they could not [prevail]. He said: whether this way or that, let them strive to demolish one house of the strong, [and] they will demolish twenty of the weak, and all will come and build [with] stones from me, and I will not be less than my fellow. This is what is written (Jeremiah 1:14), 'from the north the evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth,' and afterward (ibid. 15), 'for behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the LORD, and they shall come and set each his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,' and so on, and the evil will be an occupation for them, and there the evil inclination will always strive.

And what does this imply? That 'the Adversary (satan)' is from the language of 'turning aside (mateh),' for he turns the whole world to the scale of guilt; and it is written (Genesis 38:16), 'and he turned aside to her, to the way,' and we render [in the Targum] 'and he turned aside (ve-sata) to her'; and it is written (Proverbs 4:15), 'turn aside from it (sate me-alav) and pass on.'

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שבעים תמרים (שמות ט"ו כז) מאי טעם אלא קבלו עליהם המצות כדכתיב (שם כו) אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלהיך, מיד ויבואו אלימה (שם טז), מאי אלימה, אלי מה, ושם שתים עשרה עינות מים, הקב"ה נתן להם בתחילה עינות מים ואחר החזירם להם אבנים דכתיב (יהושע ד' ט) ושתים עשרה אבנים, מאי טעמא, מפני שבתחילה היתה התורה בעולם נמשלת למים אח"כ נקבעה במקום קבוע, מה שאין המים עושין שהיום כאן ומחר להלן:

Seventy palm trees (Exodus 15:27), what is the reason? Rather, they accepted upon themselves the commandments, as it is written (ibid. 26), 'if you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God'; immediately, 'and they came to Elim' (ibid. 27), what is 'Elima'? 'Eli mah' (my God, what?), 'and there were twelve springs of water.' The Holy One gave them at first springs of water, and afterward returned to them stones, as it is written (Joshua 4:9), 'and twelve stones.' What is the reason? Because at first the Torah in the world was likened to water, [and] afterward it was fixed in a

fixed place, which the water does not do, [being] today here and tomorrow elsewhere.

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the jealous steward and the Adversary as ‘the one who turns aside’

What does the evil inclination gain? A steward set over ‘the treasury of stones,’ jealous that all buy from the treasuries of good food, sends messengers to demolish the weak houses, reckoning that even to bring down one strong house, twenty weak ones fall, and all must then come to him. ‘From the north the evil shall break forth’ (Jeremiah 1:14); ‘I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north’ (Jeremiah 1:15). Sod: evil profits by ruin, and works most against the weak; the north

(Gevurah / Din) is where the accusing power gathers. The name 'the Adversary (satan)' is glossed from the root n-t-h / s-t-h, 'to turn aside': he 'turns the whole world to the scale of guilt', 'he turned aside to her, to the way' (Genesis 38:16), 'turn aside from it and pass on' (Proverbs 4:15).

the seventy palms, and the Torah as water then stone

The seventy palms of Elim were merited because Israel 'accepted the commandments' (Exodus 15:26). 'And they came to Elim (Elima)' is read 'eli mah', 'my God, what?' The twelve springs of water were later 'returned as stones', 'and twelve stones' (Joshua 4:9, the stones set up in the Jordan). Sod: at first the Torah was 'like water,' flowing and unfixed ('today here, tomorrow elsewhere'); afterward it was 'fixed in a fixed place': the living water given a permanent form, the Written Torah set in stone (cf. the two tablets, and Torah as water, §§ 136, 149).

Editorial decisions

- **Exodus 15:27 citation.** The verse 'and they came to Elim, and there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees' is Exodus 15:27; the source cites 'and they came to Elim' as Exodus 15:16 (a tet/kaf slip, 16 for 27). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

- **ha-satan rendered ‘the Adversary’.** ha-satan is rendered ‘the Adversary’ (with the transliteration satan kept where the passage puns on the name); the Bahir derives it from the root of ‘turning aside (mateh / sata),’ the accusing power that tilts the world toward guilt.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 166-167; the seventy grades and the seventy-first

The seventy palms as the grades of the powers. Seventy grades drawing from twelve simple ones, a palm being a “stature,” the seventy of seventy kinds (§ 166); and the counting resolved, seventy-one, with Israel a seventy-second outside the count, the seventy-first the prince of the Adversary, who rules only over chaos and can be resisted by keeping the commandments (§ 167).

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מאי שבעים תמרים (שמות ט"ו כז). מלמד ששבעים קומות יש לו להקב"ה ושואבים משתים עשרה פשוטות, מה המים האלו פשוטים אף הם פשוטים ומנא לן דתמר הוי קומה, דכתיב (שה"ש ז' ח) זאת קומתך דמתה לתמר, ולא עוד אלא שיש בתמרים שבעים מינים דכתיב ושבעים תמרים ולא היו דומים זה אל זה ופעולת זה לזה וטעם זה אינו דומה לטעם זה:

What are the seventy palm trees (Exodus 15:27)? This teaches that the Holy One has seventy grades (komot), and they draw from twelve simple ones; and as these waters are simple, so they too are simple. And whence do we [know] that a palm is a grade (komah)? As it is written (Song of Songs 7:8), 'this your stature (komatech) is likened to a palm.' And moreover, that there are in palms seventy kinds, as it is written, 'and seventy palm trees'; and they were not alike, one to another, and the action of this one [differs] from that one, and the taste of this one is not like the taste of that one.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ואמרת שבעים תמרים שבעים קומות, והא אמרת שבעים ושתים, אלא שבעים ואחת הם וישראל שבעים ושתים אך אינם בכלל, והא אמרת שבעים, אלא האחד שר השטן, משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו בנים, קנה להם עבדים ואמר להם הנה לכם בשוה לכולכם, אמר אחד מהם איני

And you said seventy palm trees, seventy grades, but you said seventy-two! Rather, seventy-one they are, and Israel [are] seventy-two, but they are not in the count. But you said seventy! Rather, the one is the prince of the Adversary. A parable: to a king who had sons; he bought them servants and said to them: here they are for you, equally, for all of you. One of them

said: I do not wish [to be] with you, for I have the ability to rob from all. The king said: since it is so, you shall have no portion among them. And he did according to all his ability, he went out and lay in wait for them on the way, and showed them much gold and precious stones and armies, and said to them: turn to me. What did the king do? He arrayed his armies and all his sons' armies, and showed them to the servants, and said to them: let this deceiver not deceive you, saying his armies are more than my armies; behold, the armies of that deceiving son who plans to rob you, and you, do not hearken to him, for at first he will smooth his words so that you are caught in his net, and afterward he will laugh [at you]; and you are my servants, and I will do with you every good, if you do not hearken to him and turn aside from after him, for he rules over chaos (tohu), as it is said (1 Samuel 12:21), 'and turn not aside, for [it is] after the chaos that does not profit and does not save, for chaos they are', yet they can harm; and behold, I advise you (Exodus 15:26), 'if you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His eyes, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes'; when you keep all His statutes, 'all the disease

רוצה עמכם כי אני יש לי יכלת לגזול מכל הכל, אמר המלך הואיל וכן הוא לא יהיה לך חלק בתוכם, ועשה ככל יכלתו יצא וארב להם בדרך והראה להם זהב הרבה ואבנים טובות וחיילות, ואמר להם סורו אלי. מה עשה המלך, סדר חיילותיו וחיילות בניו כולם, והראה להם לעבדים ואמר להם אל יטעה אתכם טועה זה לאמר חייליו רב מחיילי, הנה חיילותיו של אותו הבן רמאי וחושב לגזול אתכם, ואתם לא תשמעו לו, כי בתחילה יחליק דבריו כדי שתלכדו במצודתו ואחר כך ישחק, ואתם עבדי ואני אעשה עמכם כל טוב אם לא תשמעו לו ותסורו מאחריו כי הוא שר על תהו שנאמר (שמואל א י"ב) ולא תסורו כי אחרי התהו אשר לא יועילו ולא יצילו כי תהו המה, אך הם יכולים להזיק והנה אני מייעץ אתכם (שמות ט"ו כו) אם שמוע תשמע לקול ה' אלהיך והישר בעיניו תעשה והאזנת למצותיו ושמרת כל חוקיו, משתשמור כל חוקיו כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך, למה אמר כל זה, אלא יסגור לו כל הדלתות, כדי שלא ימצאך פעם אחת רך ופעם אחת קשה, בשמרך כל חוקיו, כל המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים, על

ידו, לא אשים עליך, מאי כי אני ה' רופאיך, ומתי הכהו, אלא כשיבא הוא ויכה אני ה' רופאיך:

which I put on Egypt I will not put upon you.' Why did He say all this? Rather, [so that] He may close for him all the doors, that he may not find you one time soft and one time hard; [and] when you keep all His statutes, 'all the disease which I put on Egypt', by his hand, 'I will not put upon you.' What is 'for I am the LORD your healer'? And when did He smite him? Rather, when he comes and smites, 'I am the LORD your healer.'

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the seventy grades drawn from the twelve

The seventy palms of Elim are ‘seventy grades (komot)’ that ‘draw from twelve simple ones’, as the waters are simple, so are

they. A palm is a ‘grade (komah)’: ‘this your stature (komatech) is likened to a palm’ (Song of Songs 7:8). And the seventy palms were of seventy kinds, differing in ‘action’ and ‘taste.’ Sod: the seventy grades are the seventy powers over the seventy nations, fed from the twelve (the twelve channels / tribes, §§ 113, 161); each distinct, none alike, the ordered multiplicity below the sefirot.

the seventy-first: the prince of the Adversary, who rules over chaos

Seventy grades, or seventy-one? The seventy-first is ‘the prince of the Adversary’; Israel are a seventy-second, ‘not in the count.’ A parable: a rebel servant who refuses his portion, boasting he can ‘rob from all,’ is cut off; he ambushes the king’s other servants with shows of gold and armies, ‘turn to me.’ The king warns them not to be deceived: the rebel ‘rules over chaos (tohu)’, ‘turn not aside after the chaos (tohu) that does not profit and does not save’ (1 Samuel 12:21), and though it ‘can harm,’ it is nothing. Keep the commandments (Exodus 15:26) and ‘the disease of Egypt’, inflicted by his hand, ‘will not be put upon you’; ‘I am the LORD your healer’, for when he smites, the Holy One heals. Sod: the seventy-first power, the accusing prince, rules only over tohu (emptiness), real enough to harm

but with no substance; Israel, bound to God, stand outside the seventy and are guarded from the Adversary.

Editorial decisions

- **sar ha-satan rendered ‘the prince of the Adversary’.** sar ha-satan is rendered ‘the prince of the Adversary,’ the seventy-first power that rules over tohu; consistent with rendering ha-satan ‘the Adversary’ in sections 161-164.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 168; the eighth and the eight extremities

Why the covenant-grade is called “the eighth.” Circumcision on the eighth day, yet in action the seventh; the eight extremities of man, two hands, two feet, head, body, the covenant that decides, and the wife who is his pair; and yet these eight are only seven, for body and covenant are one (§ 168).

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ומאי ניהו שאמרת שמיני, מפני שבו נתחלו השמונה ובו נשלמו השמונה לחשבון, אך הוא בפעולה הוי שביעי, ומאי נינהו שנתחלו בן שמונת ימים דברית מילה ושמונה הם אינם אלא שבע, ומאי טעמא אמר קב"ה שמונה, מפני שהם שמונה קצוות שיש באדם. ומאי נינהו יד ימין ושמאל רגל ימין ושמאל ראש וגוף וברית מכריע ואשתו שהיא זוגו דכתיב (בראשית ב' כד) ודבק באשתו והיו לבשר אחד הרי שמונה. ואלו הם שמונה ימי מילה כנגדן, ותמניא אלין לא הוי אלא שבעה דגוף וברית חד הוו, הרי שמונה:

And what is it that you said 'the eighth'? Because in it the eight began and in it the eight were completed, for the count; but in action it is the seventh. And what are they [that] began? The son of eight days of circumcision (brit milah); and eight are only seven. And what is the reason the Holy One said eight? Because they are the eight extremities that are in man. And what are they? The hand, right and left; the foot, right and left; the head, and the body, and the covenant (brit), which decides; and his wife, who is his pair, as it is written (Genesis 2:24), 'and he shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh', behold, eight. And these are the eight days of circumcision corresponding to them. And these eight are only seven, for the body and the covenant are one, [and yet] behold, eight.

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the eighth: circumcision and the eight extremities

'The eighth' is where 'the eight begin and are completed', circumcision on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3), yet 'in action it is the seventh.' The eight are 'the eight extremities in man': the two hands, the two feet, the head, the body, 'the covenant (brit) which decides,' and 'his wife, his pair', 'and he shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh' (Genesis 2:24). But these eight 'are only seven, for the body and the covenant are one.' Sod: the covenant (brit) is Yesod, the deciding center of the human 'extremities' as it is of the sefirot (the eighth/ninth grade, § 157); circumcision on the eighth day marks the covenant-grade, which is at once the eighth (with the wife, the partner-grade /

Malkhut) and, since body and covenant are one, the seventh, the fluid counting the Bahir keeps for the lower grades.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 169-170; the ninth and tenth, and the three victories

The ninth and tenth grades. Two wheels, one inclining north and one west, descending to the lowest of the seven earths, where the Shekhinah rests as the divine footstool, “the victory of the world below” (§ 169); and “forever and ever” read as three victories: the west, the north, and the Shekhinah below, the two wheels of the chariot together with the Shekhinah’s own endurance (§ 170).

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תשיעי מאי הוי, א"ל תשיעי ועשירי הם יחד זה כנגד זה, והאחד גבוה מחבירו ת"ק שנה, והם כעין שני אופנים, האחד נוטה לצד צפון והאחד נוטה לצד מערב והולכין עד הארץ התחתונה, ומאי תחתונה, אחרונה שבשבע ארצות למטה, וסוף שכינתו של הקב"ה תחת רגליו שנא' (ישעי' ס"ו א') השמים כסאי והארץ הדום רגלי, ושם נצחונו של עולם למטה דכתיב (שם ל"ד י') לנצח נצחים:

What is the ninth? He said to him: the ninth and the tenth are together, this corresponding to that, and the one is higher than its fellow by five hundred years; and they are like two wheels (ofanim), one inclining to the north side and one inclining to the west side, and they go down as far as the lower earth. And what is 'lower'? The last of the seven earths below. And the end of the Shekhinah of the Holy One is beneath His feet, as it is said (Isaiah 66:1), 'the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool'; and there is the victory (netzach) of the world below, as it is written (ibid. 34:10), 'forever and ever (la-netzach netzachim).'

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מאי לנצח נצחים, אלא נצח חד הוי, ומאי ניהו, זה הנוטה למערב, ושני לו מאי הוי, זה הנוטה לצד צפון, ושלישי זה הוי של מטה, שלישי, והא אמרת שני אופני המרכבה, אלא אימא סוף השכינה הוי ג"כ נצח, והיינו לנצח נצחים, נצח חד, נצחים תרי הרי תלתא:

What is 'forever and ever (la-netzach netzachim)'? Rather: 'netzach' is one, and what is it? This that inclines to the west. And its second, what is it? This that inclines to the north side. And the third, this is the one below, the third. But you said [there are only] two wheels of the chariot (ofanei ha-merkavah)? Rather, say: the end

of the Shekhinah is also a victory (netzach); and this is ‘la-netzach netzachim’: ‘netzach’ one, ‘netzachim’ two, behold three.

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the ninth and tenth: the two wheels and the victory below

The ninth and tenth grades are ‘together, this corresponding to that,’ one higher than the other ‘by five hundred years’ (the traditional measure between the heavens, Chagigah 13a). They are ‘two wheels (ofanim),’ one inclining north and one west, descending to ‘the lower earth’, the last of the seven earths, where ‘the end of the Shekhinah is beneath His feet’: ‘the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool’ (Isaiah 66:1).

There is ‘the victory (netzach) of the world below’, ‘forever and ever’ (Isaiah 34:10). Sod: the ninth and tenth are Netzach and Hod (the two ‘legs’ / wheels, the enduring powers), reaching down to the lowest world, where the Shekhinah rests as the divine ‘footstool’ (Malkhut); netzach (victory / endurance) names the enduring presence at the base of the tree.

the three victories

’Forever and ever (la-netzach netzachim)’ is read as three victories: ‘netzach’, the one inclining to the west; its second, the one inclining to the north; and a third, ‘the one below.’ The objection ‘you said [only] two wheels of the chariot’ is answered: ‘the end of the Shekhinah is also a victory (netzach),’ so ‘la-netzach netzachim’ counts three, ‘netzach’ (one) and ‘netzachim’ (two more). Sod: the two wheels (Netzach and Hod) plus the Shekhinah below make three ‘victories,’ the enduring grades that carry the flow to the last world; the plural ‘netzachim’ is read to include the Shekhinah’s own endurance.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 171; the Shekhinah below as above

The source of a formula quoted throughout later Kabbalah: “the Shekhinah is below just as the Shekhinah is above.” The students worry that ascent and descent are not symmetrical; the master answers that the two are one, because the indwelling presence stands at both poles, defined here as the light emanated from Wisdom, the glory that “fills the whole earth,” the presence among the seven powers that keeps them standing.

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His students said to him: From above to below we know, but from below to above we do not know. He said to them: But is it not one and the same, from below to above and from above to below? They said: Our master, the one who ascends is not like the one who descends, for the one who descends descends swiftly, but the one who ascends is not so. He said to them: Go out and see. He sat and expounded to them: the Shekhinah is below just as the Shekhinah is above. And what is this Shekhinah? You must say: it is the light emanated from the first light, which is Wisdom (Hokhmah); and it too surrounds all, as it is said (Isaiah 6:3), 'the whole earth is full of His glory.' What is its business here? A parable: to what is the matter compared? To a king who had seven sons, and set each one his place. He said to them: sit one upon another. The lowest said: I will not sit at the bottom, nor be far from you. He said to them: Behold, I surround you and see you all day, and this is 'the whole earth is full of His glory.' And why is it among them? In order to establish them and sustain them.

אמרו לו תלמידיו מלמעלה למטה ידעינן, מלמטה למעלה לא ידעינן, אמר להו ולאו חד הוי מלמטה למעלה ומלמעלה למטה, אמרו רבינו אינו דומה העולה ליורד שהיורד יורד במרוצה והעולה אינו כן, אמר להם צאו וראו, ישב ודרש להם שכינה למטה כשם ששכינה למעלה. ומאי שכינה זו, הוי אומר זה האור הנאצל מן האור הראשון שהוא חכמה, גם הוא מסובב הכל שנאמר (ישעי' ו' ג') מלא כל הארץ כבודו, מאי עבידתיה הכא, משל למה"ד למלך שהיו לו שבעה בנים ושם לכל אחד ואחד מקומו, אמר להם שבו זה ע"ג זה, אמר התחתון אני לא אשב למטה ולא אתרחק ממך, אמר להם הריני מסובב ורואה אתכם כל היום והיינו מלא כל הארץ כבודו, ולמה הוא ביניהם, כדי להעמידם ולקיימם:

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the Shekhinah below just as the Shekhinah above

Sod, the passage's core doctrine: the indwelling presence is one reality manifest at both ends of the divine descent, above, within the structure of the powers, and below, in the world. The students' worry (that ascent and descent are asymmetrical, the descent swift and the ascent laboured) is answered by the Shekhinah's presence at both poles: 'from below to above and from above to below' is 'one and the same.' *Scholem, Gershom 1987*

the light emanated from the first light, which is Wisdom

Sod: the Shekhinah is defined as light emanated from ‘the first light, which is Hokhmah’ (Wisdom, the second sefirah). The lowest grade thus derives its light, by a chain of emanation, from near the top, the proto-form of the doctrine in which Malkhut (the Shekhinah) receives the overflow of all the grades above. ‘The first light’ is read as Hokhmah rather than the wholly-hidden Keter.

the whole earth is full of His glory (Isaiah 6:3)

Remez: Isaiah’s seraphic ‘the whole earth is full of His glory’ (kevodo) is read as the Shekhinah surrounding and pervading all, the glory (kavod) that fills the world is the indwelling presence ‘below.’ The verse is the scriptural anchor for the below-as-above claim.

the king with seven sons

The closing mashal: a king sets seven sons each in his place and bids them sit one upon another; the lowest refuses to sit at the bottom or be far from the father, and the king answers that he surrounds and watches them all day. Read forward, the seven sons are the seven lower powers (the sefirot of construction), and the Shekhinah is ‘among them’, the surrounding, sustaining presence that keeps the structure standing. Sod, surfaced in apparatus.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 172; the seven forms and the citron

The four species of Sukkot read as the divine “body.” The seven holy forms mirrored in man (in the image of God); the six extremities and the covenant, with the seventh in the wife, taken from the “side”; and the king who plants a citron, the female: among nine male date-palms, so that the world may endure (§ 172), opening the extended reading of the etrog, lulav, myrtle, and willow that follows.

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ומה הם הבנים, כבר אמרתי לכם ששבע צורות קדושות יש לו להקב"ה וכולם כנגדן באדם שנאמר (בראשית ט' ו') כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם, (שם א' כ"ז) בצלם אלהים ברא אותו זכר ונקיבה ברא אותם, ואלו הן שוק ימין ושמאל, יד ימין ושמאל, גוף ברית וראש הרי שש, והא אמרת שבע, שבעה הוי באשתו דכתיב (שם ב' כב) והיו לבשר אחד, והא מצלעותיו נלקחה דכתיב (שם כא) ויקח אחת מצלעותיו, אמר אין מצלעותיו, ואית ליה צלע, אין, כדאמרת (שמות כ"ו כ) ולצלע המשכן ומתרגמינן ולסטר משכנא, ומאי סטר אית ביה. משל למה"ד למלך שעלה בלבו ליטע בגנו תשעה אילנין זכרים, והיו כולם דקלים, אמר כשיהיו כולם ממין אחד אי אפשר להתקיים, מה עשה נטע אתרוג ביניהם, והוא אחד מאותו התשעה שעלה בלבו להיות זכרים, ואתרוג מאי הוי נקבה והיינו דכתיב (ויקרא כ"ג א) פרי עץ הדר, כפת תמרים, מאי פרי עץ הדר, כדמתרגמינן פרי אילנא אתרוגין ולולבין:

And what are the sons? I have already told you that the Holy One has seven holy forms, and all of them correspond to [something] in man, as it is said (Genesis 9:6), 'for in the image of God He made man,' (ibid. 1:27) 'in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.' And these are: the thigh, right and left; the hand, right and left; the body, the covenant (brit), and the head, behold, six. But you said seven! The seventh is in his wife, as it is written (Genesis 2:24), 'and they shall be one flesh.' But she was taken from his rib, as it is written (ibid. 21), 'and he took one of his ribs (tzalotav).' He said: [is it] 'of his ribs'? and does He have a rib (tzela)? Yes, as you said (Exodus 26:20), 'and for the side (tzela) of the tabernacle,' and we render [in the Targum] 'and for the side (setar) of the tabernacle'; and what side does it have? A parable: to a king who took to his heart to plant in his garden nine male trees, and they were all date-palms. He said: when they are all of one kind, it is impossible [for them] to endure. What did he do? He planted a citron (etrog) among them; and it is one of those nine that he took to heart to be male, and the citron: what is it? Female. And this is what is written (Leviticus 23:40), 'the fruit of a goodly tree (pri etz

hadar), branches of palm trees';
what is 'the fruit of a goodly tree'?
As we render [in the Targum]: 'the
fruit of the tree, citrons and palm-
branches.'

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the seven holy forms and the human image

The Holy One has ‘seven holy forms,’ all mirrored in man, ‘for in the image of God He made man’ (Genesis 9:6; 1:27, ‘male and female He created them’). The six are the two thighs, the two hands (or arms), the body, the covenant (brit, Yesod), and the head; the seventh is ‘in his wife’, ‘they shall be one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24), taken from the ‘rib (tzela),’ read as ‘side (setar)’ (Exodus 26:20 and its Targum). Sod: the seven lower grades are figured as the limbs of the divine ‘body’ (the six extremities, §

172, plus the female / Shekhinah, the seventh, taken from the 'side'); man in the image reflects them.

the citron among the nine: the female and the four species

A king plants nine male date-palms, but 'one kind cannot endure,' so he plants a citron (etrog) among them, one of the nine, but 'female.' 'The fruit of a goodly tree (pri etz hadar), branches of palm trees' (Leviticus 23:40) is the etrog and the lulav, the four species of Sukkot, read as the divine 'body': the etrog the female (Malkhut / the Shekhinah), the palm-branch (lulav) the masculine spine (§ 176). Sod: the etrog / female is needed among the male grades for the world to endure, the receiving grade that completes the giving ones (cf. the king's daughter, § 54; the bride who gathers, § 156). The passage opens the extended reading of the four species as the sefirot (§§ 172-178).

Editorial decisions

- **Genesis 2:24 citation.** 'And they shall be one flesh' is Genesis 2:24; the source cites it as Genesis 2:22 (a bet/dalet slip). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.
- **Leviticus 23:40 citation.** 'The fruit of a goodly tree, branches of palm trees' is Leviticus 23:40; the source cites it

as Leviticus 23:1 (which is the chapter opening, not the four-species verse). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 173-175; the glory, the Song of Songs, and the citron

The four species through the word “goodly (hadar).” The glory as the female, the hadar of the Song of Songs, taken from Adam because the world cannot endure without her (§ 173); the Song of Songs as the holy of holies, holy for the six extremities (§ 174); and the citron as the “holy,” read “ha-dar”, that which dwells: separate from the bundle yet bound with all (§ 175).

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מאי הדר, היינו הדר הכל, והיינו הדר דשיר השירים דאמר בהו (שה"ש ו' י) מי זאת הנשקפה כמו שחר יפה כלבנה ברה כחמה איומה כנדגלות, והיינו על שם נקבה, ועל שמה נלקחה נקבה מאדם שאי אפשר להתקיים עולם התחתון בלא נקבה, ומ"ט אתקריאת נקבה על שם שנקביה רחבים, ויש לה נקבים יתרים על האיש, ומאי ניהו, נקבי שדים ורחם ובית קבול:

What is 'goodly (hadar)'? It is the glory (hadar) of all; and it is the 'hadar' of the Song of Songs, of which it is said (Song of Songs 6:10), 'who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as bannered hosts'; and it is on account of the female. And on her account the female was taken from Adam, for it is impossible for the lower world to endure without a female. And why is she called female (nekevah)? On account that her openings (nekaveha) are wide, and she has openings additional to those of the man; and what are they? The openings of the breasts, and the womb, and the receptacle.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי ניהו שאמרת שיר השירים דהוא הדר, אין הדר הוא לכל ספרי הקודש, דאמר ר' יוחנן כל הספרים קדושים וכל התורה קודש ושיר השירים קודש קדשים, ומאי ניהו קדש קדשים. אלא קודש שהוא לקדשים, ומה הם הקדשים, אלו שהם כנגד שש

And what is it that you said, that the Song of Songs is the glory (hadar)? Yes, it is the glory of all the holy books; for Rabbi Yochanan said: all the books are holy, and all the Torah is holy, and the Song of Songs is the holy of holies (kodesh kodashim). And what is 'holy of holies'? Rather, holy that is for the holy ones

קצוות שבאדם, וקודש הוי להו קודש לכולהו:

(kedoshim); and what are the holy ones? These are [those] that correspond to the six extremities in man; and it is holy to them: holy to all of them.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)



ומאי ניהו קודש, זה אתרוג שהוא הדר הכל, ולמה נקרא שמו הדר, אל תקרי הדר אלא הדר, זה אתרוג שהוא נפרד מאגד לולב ואין מצות לולב קיימת אלא בו, והוא גם כן אגוד עם הכל שעם כל אחד הוא ועם כולן יחד הוא:

And what is 'holy'? This is the citron (etrog), which is the glory (hadar) of all. And why is its name called 'hadar'? Do not read 'goodly (hadar)' but 'that which dwells (ha-dar)': this is the citron, which is separate from the bundle of the lulav, and the commandment of the lulav is not fulfilled except with it; and it is also bound together with all, for it is with each one, and with all of them together.

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An orientation

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the glory (hadar) and the female

'Goodly (hadar)' is 'the glory of all', the 'hadar' of the Song of Songs: 'who is this that looks forth like the dawn… awesome as bannered hosts' (Song of Songs 6:10), said 'on account of the female.' The female was taken from Adam because 'the lower world cannot endure without a female,' and she is 'female (nekevah)' because her 'openings (nekaveha) are wide', the openings the man lacks (breasts, womb, receptacle). Sod: the glory / hadar is the Shekhinah, the divine feminine, the receiving grade (Malkhut) whose 'openings' make her the vessel that receives and bears the flow; the world below needs her as the male world needs the female.

the Song of Songs, the holy of holies

The Song of Songs is 'the glory (hadar) of all the holy books': 'all the books are holy, and all the Torah is holy, and the Song of Songs is the holy of holies' (Rabbi Akiva's dictum, Mishnah Yadayim 3:5, here ascribed to Rabbi Yochanan). 'Holy of holies' is read 'holy that is for the holy ones (kedoshim)', the grades that

correspond to ‘the six extremities in man’; the Song is holy to them all. Sod: the Song of Songs, the love-song of the King and the bride, is the innermost holiness because it sings the union of the grades, the six (the masculine extremities, Tiferet and its neighbors) with the holy of holies (the Shekhinah, the etrog / female of § 172).

the citron: ‘that which dwells’

The ‘holy’ is the citron (etrog), ‘the glory (hadar) of all.’ Its name ‘hadar’ is read ‘ha-dar’, ‘that which dwells (abides)’: the citron is ‘separate from the bundle of the lulav,’ yet ‘the commandment of the lulav is not fulfilled without it,’ and ‘it is bound with all, with each one and with all together.’ Sod: the etrog (the Shekhinah / Malkhut, the female) both stands apart from the three bound species (the masculine grades) and is joined to them all: the indwelling glory that abides (‘dar’) in the world, necessary to and united with the whole (cf. the plot watered separately, § 133, and the daughter, § 54).

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 176-177; the palm-branch and the willows

The lulav, myrtle, and willows as the divine "body." The lulav as the spine and the myrtle's three leaves, branch to the left, leafy to the right, the tree in the middle, the root of the tree (§ 176); and the two willows as the two thighs, the greater to the west and the northern smaller by five hundred years (§ 177): the central column, and the two legs of the tree.

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לולב כנגד מאי, כנגד חוט השדרה. וכן הוא אומר (ויקרא כ"ג מ) וענף עץ עבות, צריך הוא להיות ענפיו חופין את רובו, ואם אין ענפיו חופין את רובו אינו כלום, מפני מה, משל למה"ד לאדם שיש לו זרועותיו ובהם יגין על ראשו, הרי זרועותיו שנים וראשו שלשה, והיינו ענף לשמאל, עבות לימין, נמצא עץ באמצע, ולמה נאמר בו עץ, מפני שהוא שורש האילן:

The lulav corresponds to what? To the spinal cord (chut ha-shidrah). And so it says (Leviticus 23:40), 'and a branch of a leafy tree (anaf etz avot)'; its branches (anafav) must cover most of it, and if its branches do not cover most of it, it is nothing. Why? A parable: to a man who has his arms, and with them he shields his head; behold, his arms are two, and his head is [the] third; and this is 'branch (anaf)' to the left, 'leafy (avot)' to the right, and the tree (etz) is found in the middle. And why is 'tree (etz)' said of it? Because it is the root of the tree (shoresh ha-ilan).

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ומאי וערבי נחל (שם) אלו כנגד שוקי אדם שהם שנים, ומאי ניהו לישנא דערבי נחל, משום דגדול שבהם הוי למערב ומשם יונק כחו, ושל צפון קטן ממנו מהלך ת"ק שנה, והוא ברוח צפונית מערבית, ובו פועל, ונקרא על שמו, והם שניהם ערבים:

And what is 'and willows of the brook (arvei nachal)' (ibid.)? These correspond to the two thighs of man, which are two. And what is [the meaning of] the term 'willows of the brook (arvei nachal)'? Because the greater of them is to the west, and from there it draws its power; and the one of the north is smaller than it by a journey of five hundred years, and it is in the

north-west, and works in it, and is called by its name; and both of them are ‘willows (aravim).’

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An orientation

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the palm-branch and the myrtle: the spine and the three

The lulav (palm-branch) is ‘the spinal cord (chut ha-shidrah)’, the central column. ‘A branch of a leafy tree (anaf etz avot)’ (the myrtle, Leviticus 23:40) must have its ‘branches cover most of it,’ as a man’s two arms shield his head (‘his arms two, his head the third’): ‘branch (anaf)’ to the left, ‘leafy (avot)’ to the right, and ‘the tree (etz)’ in the middle, ‘because it is the root of the tree (shoresh ha-ilan).’ Sod: the lulav / spine and the myrtle’s middle ‘tree’ are the central grade, Tiferet, the trunk between

the left and right arms (Gevurah and Chesed); the ‘root of the tree’ from which the branches spread (cf. Tiferet as the etz, § 178, and the middle that makes peace, § 153).

the willows: the two thighs

’And willows of the brook (arvei nachal)’ (Leviticus 23:40) are ‘the two thighs of man.’ The greater willow is ‘to the west, and from there it draws its power’; the northern one is ‘smaller by a journey of five hundred years,’ set ‘in the north-west’ and ‘called by its name’; ‘both of them are willows.’ Sod: the two willows are the two thighs / legs of the divine ‘body’: Netzach and Hod (the ninth and tenth grades of §§ 169-170, the two ‘wheels’ one higher by five hundred years), the enduring powers on the west and north through which the flow descends to the world.

Sefer ha-Bahir § 178; the brook and the inheritance

The sefirotic flow mapped as a river-system. Each grade a "brook" flowing to the sea (the citron), through one deciding channel; and the place-names of the wilderness itinerary, Mattanah, Naḥaliel, Bamoth, the field of Moab (read "from the father," Abraham), Lebanon: read as the stages of the descent from wisdom to the last grade, with the willows as the two wheels of the chariot (§ 178).

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Another interpretation of ‘willows of the brook (arvei nachal)’: that sometimes they mix (me’arvim) their actions, one with the other. And what is ‘and willows of the brook (arvei nachal)’? Say: on account of the place in which they are fixed, whose name is ‘brook (nachal),’ as it is written (Ecclesiastes 1:7), ‘all the brooks (nechalim) go to the sea, and the sea is not full.’ And what is this sea? Say: this is the citron (etrog). And whence do we [know] that each and every measure of these seven is called ‘brook (nachal)’? As it is written (Numbers 21:19), ‘and from Mattanah Nahaliel’, do not read ‘Nahaliel’ but ‘the brooks of God (nachalei El)’; and all the six go by one way to the sea. And what is that one way that decides among them? As it is written (Habakkuk 3:5), ‘before him goes pestilence, and a burning coal (reshef) goes forth at his feet’; and they all go to that channel (tzinor), and from that channel to the sea; and this is what is written ‘and from Mattanah Nahaliel’, from the place that was given, which is the brain (moach), to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth (the heights), and what is Bamoth? As we render [in the Targum]: ‘Ramata (the heights).’ What is ‘Ramata’? That ‘segolta’ which is after the ‘zarka.’ And [from Bamoth] ‘the valley

ד”א ערבי נחל, שפעמים מערבים פעולותם זה עם זה, ומאי וערבי נחל, הוי אומר על שם המקום שהם קבועים בו ששמו נחל דכתיב (קהלת א’ ז) כל הנחלים הולכים אל הים והים איננו מלא, ומאי ניהו ים זה, הוי אומר זה אתרוג ומנא לן דכל מדה ומדה מאלה השבעה אתקרי נחל דכתיב (במדבר כ”א יט) וממתנה נחליאל, אל תקרי נחליאל אלא נחלי אל, וכל הששה הולכים על דרך אחד אל הים, ומאי ניהו אותו דרך אחד מכריע בנתיים דכתיב (חבקוק ג’ ה) לפניו ילך דבר ויצא רשף לרגליו, וכולם הולכים לאותו צינור ומאתו צינור אל הים והיינו דכתיב וממתנה נחליאל, ממקום שניתן דהיינו המוח לנחליאל ומנחליאל במות ומאי במות כדמתרגם רמתה, מאי רמתה אותה סגולתא שאחרי הזרקא, ומבמות הגיא אשר בשדה מואב ראש הפסגה ונשקפה על פני הישימון, ומבמות הגי אשר בשדה מואב אשר הוא מזומן, ומאי הוא אותו אשר בשדה מואב, אל תקרי מואב אלא מאב, אותו האב שנאמר עליו (בראשית כ”ו ה) עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקולי וישמור משמרתי מצותי חקותי וגו’, ומאי ניהו אותו השדה, אותו

שהוא בראש הפסגה וגם נשקפה על פני הישימון ומתרגמינן שמיא, ועל אותו הצינור נאמר (שה"ש ד' טו) מעין גנים באר מים חיים ונוזלים מן לבנון, ומאי ניהו לבנון, הרי אומר זה חכמה, ומאי ערבי נחל, הרי אומר אותו שנתן נחלה לישראל והיינו שני אופני המרכבה:

that is in the field of Moab, the top of the Pisgah, and it looks down upon the face of the wasteland (ha-yeshimon)'; 'the valley that is in the field of Moab', which is prepared. And what is that 'which is in the field of Moab'? Do not read 'Moab' but 'from the father (me-av)', that father of whom it is said (Genesis 26:5), 'because Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes,' and so on. And what is that field? The one that is at the top of the Pisgah, and also 'looks down upon the face of the wasteland,' which we render [in the Targum] 'the heavens (shemaya).' And of that channel (tzinor) it is said (Song of Songs 4:15), 'a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon.' And what is Lebanon? Say: this is wisdom (chokhmah). And what is 'willows of the brook (arvei nachal)'? Say: that one who gave an inheritance (nachalah) to Israel; and this is the two wheels of the chariot (ofanei ha-merkavah).

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





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the brooks, the channel, and the sea

The willows ‘mix (me’arvim) their actions’; and ‘willows of the brook (arvei nachal)’ are named for the ‘brook (nachal)’ in which they are fixed, ‘all the brooks go to the sea, and the sea is not full’ (Ecclesiastes 1:7), the sea being the citron (the Shekhinah / Malkhut that receives all). Each of the seven grades is a ‘brook (nachal)’: ‘from Mattanah Nahaliel’ read as ‘the brooks of God (nachalei El)’ (Numbers 21:19). All six go ‘by one way’, the deciding channel (Habakkuk 3:5), to that channel (tzinor), and from it to the sea. Sod: the six upper grades pour their flow through the single conduit (Yesod, the deciding way) into the last grade, the ‘sea’; the flow is ‘given (Mattanah)’ from the ‘brain (moach)’, the supernal grades, and passes down the map of place-names.

the itinerary of the flow: from the brain to Lebanon

The place-names of Numbers 21:19-20 are read as the stages of the descending flow: ‘Mattanah (the gift)’, the place given, the brain (moach); ‘Nahaliel’; ‘Bamoth,’ rendered ‘Ramata (the heights),’ the cantillation ‘segolta’ after the ‘zarka’; ‘the valley in the field of Moab,’ the top of Pisgah, looking down on ‘the wasteland (yeshimon),’ rendered ‘the heavens.’ ‘Moab’ is read ‘from the father (me-av)’, Abraham, ‘because Abraham hearkened to My voice and kept My charge’ (Genesis 26:5). Of the channel it is said, ‘a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon’ (Song of Songs 4:15), and ‘Lebanon is wisdom (chokhmah).’ And the willows, ‘that one who gave an inheritance (nachalah) to Israel,’ are ‘the two wheels of the chariot’ (Netzach and Hod, §§ 169-170, 177). Sod: the whole passage maps the sefirotic flow as a river-system from Chokhmah (Lebanon), the source, down through the channels to the sea (Malkhut), the human ‘brain’ and ‘heavens’ marking the supernal stages.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 179-181; the ten wheels and the Sabbath

The cosmology of the wheels, closing with the Sabbath. Ten wheels turned by the ten sayings, the world a mustard seed held up by the divine breath (§ 179); the three wheels, the foundation of the world (Yesod, the tzaddik) in the middle holding the soul of all living, and the two measures of the Sabbath, “remember” and “keep” (§ 180); and why “My Sabbaths” is plural: the king’s bride and his sons rejoicing together (§ 181).

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תאנא עשרה גלגלים ועשרה מאמרות הם, וכל גלגל וגלגל יש לו מאמר, לא שהוא סובב בו אלא שהוא מסבבו, העוה"ז כהרדלא בעזקתא, מ"ט משום רוחא דמנשבא ביה וקאים בהכי, ואלמלא כליא רוחא חדא שעתא או רגעא חדא איתחרב עלמא:

It was taught: there are ten wheels (galgalim) and ten sayings (ma'amarot), and each and every wheel has a saying: not that [the saying] revolves in it, but that it makes it revolve. This world is like a mustard seed in a ring; why? Because of the spirit (rucha) that blows in it, and by this it stands; and were the spirit to cease for one hour or one moment, the world would be destroyed.

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שלשה גלגלים יש לו לעוה"ז והאיך, העולם הזה נוטה לצד צפון ולדרום, היאך, צפונית מערבית דרומית, צפונית מערבית הוא גלגל הראשון הסובב עלינו, צפונית מערבית סלקא דעתך, אלא אימא כחו צפונית, והיינו שוק שמאל, ועליו גלגל שני והוא כולו מערבית. מערבית ס"ד, אלא אימא כחו הוה מערב, אלו הן נצחי עולם, ועליו גלגל שלישי וכחו מערבית דרומית, ומאי ניהו כחא קמא דאמרת שני, הוי אומר שוק של ימין, והדין כחא

This world has three wheels; and how? This world inclines to the north side and to the south; how? North, west, south. The north-west is the first wheel that revolves upon us; 'north-west,' does it enter your mind? Rather say: its power is northern, and this is the left thigh. And upon it a second wheel, and it is entirely western; 'western,' [do you think]? Rather say: its power is western, these are the 'victories of the world (nitzchei olam).' And upon it a third wheel, and its power is west-south. And what is that first power that you said [was]

second? Say: the right thigh. And this power of west-south is the foundation of the world, as it is said of it (Proverbs 10:25), 'and the righteous is the foundation of the world (tzaddik yesod olam)'; and the second power stands behind the chariot (merkavah), and the first power before it, and the righteous, foundation of the world, in the middle. It goes out from the south of the world, and it rules over these two; also in its hand is the soul of all living (nefesh kol chai), for it is the life of the worlds (chai ha-olamim), and every expression of creation is done through it; and of it is written (Exodus 31:17), '[He] rested and was refreshed (shavat va-yinafash),' and it is the measure of the Sabbath day; and of it is said (Exodus 20:8), 'remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But is it not also written (Deuteronomy 5:12), 'keep (shamor)'? That [refers] to the seventh measure; and of the seventh it is said (Leviticus 19:30), 'you shall keep My Sabbaths, and revere My sanctuary.' And what is the seventh measure? This is the measure of the goodness of the Holy One.

דמערבית דרומית הוא יסודו של עולם שנאמר בו (משלי י' כו) וצדיק יסוד עולם, וכח שני עומד מאחורי המרכבה וכחו הראשון מלפניו, וצדיק יסוד עולם באמצע, הוא יוצא מדרומו של עולם, והוא שר על אלה השנים, גם בידו נפש כל חי כי הוא חי העולמים, וכל לשון בריאה בדידיה עבידא, ועליו כתיב (שמות ל"א יז) שבת וינפש, והוא מדת יום השבת, ועליו נאמר (שם כ' ח) זכור את יום השבת לקדשו, והא ג"כ כתיב (דברים ה' יב) שמור, ההיא במדה שביעית, ובשביעית אמר הכתוב (ויקרא י"ט ל) את שבתותי תשמורו ומקדשו תראו, ומאי ניהו מדה שביעית, זה מדת טובו של הקב"ה:

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ומאי טעמא אמר (שם) את שבתותי תשמורו ולא אמר את שבתי, משל למה"ד למלך שהיתה לו כלה נאה, וכל שבוע ושבוע מזמינה יום אחד להיות עמו, והמלך יש לו בנים נאים ואוהבם, אמר להם הואיל וכן היא שמחו אתה גם כן ביום שמחתי, כי בשלכם אני משתדל ואתם ג"כ הדרו אותי:

And what is the reason it says (ibid.) 'you shall keep My Sabbaths (shabtotai)' and does not say 'My Sabbath (shabbati)'? A parable: to a king who had a fine bride, and every week he invites her one day to be with him; and the king has fine sons whom he loves. He said to them: since it is so, rejoice you also on the day of my joy; for on your account I strive, and you too: honor me.

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An orientation

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the ten wheels and the mustard seed

’Ten wheels (galgalim) and ten sayings (ma’amarot)’, each wheel has a saying that ‘makes it revolve’ (the ten creative utterances

turning the ten spheres). 'This world is like a mustard seed in a ring' held up 'by the spirit (rucha) that blows in it'; 'were the spirit to cease one hour or one moment, the world would be destroyed.' Sod: the ten sefirot / sayings are the powers that turn the cosmos; the whole created world is a tiny thing sustained moment by moment by the divine breath, a striking image of continuous creation (cf. the ten sayings, §§ 141-160).

the three wheels and the foundation of the world

This world has three wheels, whose powers are north (the left thigh), west (the 'victories of the world', Netzach and Hod), and west-south, 'the foundation of the world (yesod olam),' for 'the righteous is the foundation of the world' (Proverbs 10:25). The second power stands behind the chariot, the first before it, and 'the righteous, foundation of the world' in the middle: it 'rules over these two,' holds 'the soul of all living (nefesh kol chai),' is 'the life of the worlds (chai ha-olamim),' and 'every expression of creation is done through it.' Sod: Yesod, the tzaddik, the central channel between the two 'thighs' (Netzach and Hod), through which the flow and the souls pass; 'rested and was refreshed' (Exodus 31:17) is its measure, the Sabbath. (The verbatim Hebrew cites 'tzaddik yesod olam' as Proverbs 10:26; the verse is at 10:25.)

the two Sabbaths: 'remember' and 'keep,' the bride and the sons

'Remember the Sabbath' (Exodus 20:8) is Yesod, the measure of the Sabbath day; 'keep (shamor)' (Deuteronomy 5:12) is 'the seventh measure', 'you shall keep My Sabbaths' (Leviticus 19:30), 'the measure of the goodness of the Holy One' (the Shekhinah / Malkhut, the Sabbath queen). 'My Sabbaths' is plural, not 'My Sabbath': a king who invites his fine bride one day each week bids his beloved sons rejoice too on the day of his joy, 'for on your account I strive, and you too, honor me.' Sod: the plural holds both Sabbaths, 'remember' (the masculine giving grade, Yesod / Tiferet) and 'keep' (the feminine receiving grade, the Shekhinah, the bride); the union of the King and the bride on the Sabbath, in which Israel (the sons) rejoice (cf. the daughter and the bride, §§ 54, 156).

Editorial decisions

- **Proverbs 10:25 citation.** 'And the righteous is the foundation of the world (tzaddik yesod olam)' is Proverbs 10:25; the source cites it as Proverbs 10:26 (a slip). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 182-183; remember and keep, the life of the worlds

Closing the Sabbath, and the blessing. “Remember” for the male and “keep” for the bride, the sanctuary guarded from improper thought (§ 182); and why the blessing says “over all that He created… the life of the worlds,” in the third person, because it blesses the hidden Holy One who pours His wisdom through that life of the worlds to all (§ 183).

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ומאי טעמא זכור ושמור, זכור לזכר ושמור לכלה, ומאי טעמא ומקדשי תראו, שמרו עצמכם מהרהור, כי מקדשי קדש הוא, למה, כי אני ה׳ מקדשכם בכל:

And what is the reason [for] ‘remember (zachor)’ and ‘keep (shamor)’? ‘Remember (zachor)’ for the male (zachar), and ‘keep (shamor)’ for the bride. And what is the reason [for] ‘and revere My sanctuary (u-mikdashi tira’u)’? Guard yourselves from [improper] thought (hirhur), for My sanctuary is holy; why? for ‘I am the LORD who sanctifies you’ in all.

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ומאי טעמא אמרינן על כל מה שברא וכו׳ חי העולמים, ולא אמרינן על כל מה שבראת, אלא אנו מברכין להקב”ה שמשפיע חכמתו לחי העולמים זה והוא נותן הכל:

And what is the reason we say, over all that He created, and so on, ‘the life of the worlds (chai ha-olamim),’ and we do not say ‘over all that You created’? Rather, we bless the Holy One who pours His wisdom to this ‘life of the worlds,’ and He gives all.

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remember and keep: the male and the bride

'Remember (zachor)' (Exodus 20:8) is for the 'male (zachar)', the masculine giving grade, and 'keep (shamor)' (Deuteronomy 5:12) for 'the bride', the feminine receiving grade (§§ 180-181). 'And revere My sanctuary (u-mikdashi tira'u)' (Leviticus 19:30) means 'guard yourselves from [improper] thought (hirhur),' for the sanctuary is 'holy', 'I am the LORD who sanctifies you.' Sod: the two words of the Sabbath commandment answer to the two grades, Yesod / Tiferet (remember) and the Shekhinah / Malkhut (keep, the bride), and their union requires purity of thought, the sanctuary being the Shekhinah herself (cf. the Song of Songs as the holy of holies, § 174).

the life of the worlds: the blessing

The blessing said 'over all that He created' names 'the life of the worlds (chai ha-olamim)', and it is said of Him (in the third person), not 'over all that You created' (the second person), because the blessing is directed to the Holy One who 'pours His wisdom' to that 'life of the worlds' (Yesod, chai ha-olamim, the

grade through which the flow passes), ‘and He gives all.’ Sod: the grammatical shift marks the flow, the blessing rises to the hidden Holy One, who pours the wisdom down through the ‘life of the worlds’ to all (cf. Yesod as ‘chai ha-olamim,’ § 180).

Sefer ha-Bahir § 184; the souls in the body and the bread

One of the book's fullest passages on the soul and the transmigration of souls. The treasury of souls in the "life of the worlds," and the son of David who waits until all the souls in the body are exhausted; and the long parable of the bread, the soul sent, neglected, molded, "repaired," and re-issued, guarded by the diligent and squandered by the negligent who starves and dies: the soul given again and again, whose only true bread is the Torah (§ 184).

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ומאי טעמא אמרינן אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו, ולא אמרינן אשר קדשתנו וצויתנו, מלמד שחי העולמים כלולים בו כל המצות כולן וברחמיו עלינו נתתם לנו כדי לקדשנו בהם ואולי נזכה, ומ"ט, כי בשעה שאנו נזכה בעוה"ז לעוה"ב שהוא גדול, ובידו אוצר כל הנשמות, ובשעה שישראל טובים הנשמות זוכות לצאת ולבוא לעוה"ז, ואם אינם טובים לא יצאו, והיינו דאמרינן, אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף, ומאי כל הנשמות שבגוף, הוי אומר כל הנשמות שבגוף האדם ויזכו החדשות לצאת, ואז בן דוד בא זוכה להולד כי נשמתו תצא חדשה בכלל האחרים, משל למה"ד למלך שהיה לו חיל ושלח להם פת מאכל לרוב, ונתעצלו ולא אכלו אותו גם לא שמרוהו ונתעפש ונפסד הפת, בא לדרוש ולפקוד אם יש להם מה יאכלו ואם אכלו מה ששלח להם מצא להם פת מעופש ומצאם מתביישים לבקש פת אחרת, כלומר זה לא שמרנו ואחר נבקש, גם המלך כעס ולקח אותו הפת המעופש וציוה עליו לייבשו ולתקנו כפי היכלת, ונשבע לאלה האנשים פת אחרת לא אתן להם

And what is the reason we say 'who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us,' and we do not say 'You sanctified us and commanded us (asher kidashtanu ve-tzivitanu)'? This teaches that in the life of the worlds all the commandments are included, and in His mercy upon us He gave them to us in order to sanctify us by them, and perhaps we will merit. And what is the reason? For at the time when we merit, in this world, the world to come, which is great, and in His hand is the treasury of all the souls; and at the time when Israel are good, the souls merit to go out and to come to this world; and if they are not good, they will not go out. And this is what we say: 'the son of David will not come until all the souls in the body are exhausted.' And what is 'all the souls in the body'? Say: all the souls in the body of the man; and when the new ones merit to go out, then the son of David comes, he merits to be born, for his soul will go out new among the others. A parable: to a king who had a legion, and he sent them a great deal of bread for food; and they were lazy and did not eat it, and also did not guard it, and it molded and the bread was spoiled. He came to inquire and to visit [to see] whether they have

what to eat, and whether they ate what he had sent them; and he found them [with] moldy bread, and found them ashamed to ask for other bread, as if to say, 'this we did not guard, and shall we ask for other?' The king too was angry, and he took that moldy bread and commanded that it be dried and repaired as much as possible, and he swore to these men: 'other bread I will not give them until they eat all this moldy bread.' They sent it to them anew. What did they do? They said to divide it; they divided it, and each one of them took his portion. The diligent one put his portion in the air, and guarded it, and ate well; and the other took it and ate of it with appetite, he ate what he ate, and the rest he left and did not guard, for he despaired of it, and it spoiled the more and molded, and he could not eat it at all, and he remained hungry until he died. The iniquity of his body was visited upon him: 'why did you kill yourself? Was it not enough that you spoiled the bread for yourselves at first, and I returned it to you repaired, and you spoiled it, and you spoiled your portion and were negligent to guard it, and moreover you killed yourself?' And he answers: 'my lord, what could I have done?' And [the king] answers him: 'you should have guarded it; and if you

עד שיאכלו כל הפת המעופש
הזה, שלחו להם מחדש, מה עשו,
אמרו לחלוק אותו, חלקוהו ונטל
כל אחד מהם חלקו, הזריז שם
חלקו באויר ושמרו ואכלו טוב,
והאחר לקחו ואכל ממנו בתאוה,
אכל מה שאכל והשאר הניחו ולא
שמרו כי נתייאש ממנו ונפסד
יותר ונתעפש ולא יכול כלל
לאכלו ונשאר רעב עד שמת,
נפקד עליו עון גופו למה הרגת
עצמך, לא די שהפת קלקלתם
לכם מתחילה והחזרתיו לכם
מתוקן וקלקלתם אותו' ואתה
קלקלת חלקך ונתרשלת מלשמרו,
ולא עוד אלא שהרגת עצמך, והוא
משיב אדוני מה הייתי עושה,
ועונה אותו היה לך לשומרו, ואם
תאמר לא יכלת, היה לך להשגיח
בחבירך ושכניך שחלקו עמך הפת
ותראה מעשיהם ושמירתם
ותשתדל לשמור כמותם, ועוד
דורשין אותו למה הרגת עצמך,
לא די שקלקלת הפת אלא עוד
הוספת והרגת חומר גופך וקצרת
ימיך או גרמת, ואפשר שהיה יוצא
ברא מעליא ממך שהיה מציל
אותך וקלקולך ואחרים וקלקולם,
לכן מכל צד ירבו עליך יסורין,
נבהל והשיב ומה הייתי יכול
לעשות אחר שלא היה לי פת,
וממה הייתי יכול לחיות, אומרים
לו אם היית עמל ויגע בתורה לא

היית משיב כסילות ועזות כזאת, שמתוך תשובת דבריך ניכר שלא עמלת ולא יגעת בתורה והלא כתוב בתורה כי לא על הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם כי על כל מוצא פי ה' יחיה האדם (דברים ח, ג), היה לך לדרוש ולחקור ולשאול מה הדבר אשר יחיה האדם בו, ומאי ניהו מוצא פי ה', הוי אומר יחיה בתורה דהיינו מוצא פי ה', מכאן אמרו ולא עם הארץ חסיד, אם עליו אינו גומל חסד איך אפשר להקרא חסיד:

say you could not, you should have looked at your fellow and your neighbors who divided the bread with you, and seen their deeds and their guarding, and striven to guard as they did.' And moreover they question him: 'why did you kill yourself? Was it not enough that you spoiled the bread, but you added and killed the matter of your body and shortened your days,' or caused [it]; 'and perhaps a fitting son would have gone out from you, who would have saved you from your spoiling, and others from their spoiling; therefore from every side sufferings shall multiply upon you.' He was terrified and answered: 'and what could I have done, since I had no bread, and from what could I have lived?' They say to him: 'if you had toiled and labored in the Torah, you would not have answered such foolishness and insolence; for from the answer of your words it is evident that you did not toil and did not labor in the Torah. And is it not written in the Torah, 'for not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD does man live' (Deuteronomy 8:3)? You should have expounded and inquired and asked: what is the thing by which man lives? And what is 'every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD'?

Say: he lives by the Torah, which is ‘every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.’ From here they said: an am ha’aretz cannot be pious (chasid); if he does no loving-kindness for himself, how is it possible for him to be called pious?

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the treasury of souls and the souls in the body

'Who sanctified us' (not 'You') because the commandments are 'included in the life of the worlds' (Yesod) and given to us to sanctify us. In God's hand is 'the treasury of all the souls'; when Israel are worthy, souls 'go out' into the world, 'the son of David will not come until all the souls in the body (guf) are exhausted'

(Yevamot 62a): the pre-existent souls in the supernal treasury (the guf) must all descend before the Messiah is born, his own soul going out 'new among the others.' Sod: creation is not complete until every soul in the treasury has been born; the Messiah waits on the exhaustion of the store.

the parable of the bread: the transmigration of souls (gilgul)

The long parable reads the soul as bread the king sends his legion: neglected, it molds; the king dries and 'repairs' it and sends it back, swearing they will get no other until it is finished. Divided into portions, the diligent servant guards his and eats well; the negligent one lets his spoil again and starves to death, and is charged with 'killing himself,' with wasting the soul that might have borne 'a fitting son.' Sod: the moldy bread repaired and re-issued is the soul cleansed and returned in a new life, the transmigration of souls (gilgul; see the reused garments, § 122): the soul is given again and again until it is 'consumed' rightly, and to waste one's life is to squander a soul that must return. The only true bread is the Torah, 'not by bread alone does man live, but by every word from the mouth of the LORD' (Deuteronomy 8:3), so that 'an am ha'aretz cannot be pious (chasid),' for one who does no loving-kindness even for his own soul cannot be called by that name.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 185-186; Torah as loving-kindness and the seven spirits

Torah-study as loving-kindness, and the seven spirits as the sefirot. Whoever studies Torah "does loving-kindness with his Maker" and "helps" Him (§ 185); and the seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2, wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the LORD: read as the grades, with the fear of the LORD as "the treasury of the Torah" that must be gained before Torah, as one brings a vessel before the honey (§ 186).

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ובמה יתחסד עם קונו, בתלמוד תורה, שכל הלומד תורה גומל חסד לקונו דכתיב (שם ל"ג כו) רוכב שמים בעזרך, הוי אומר כשאתם לומדים תורה לשמה אזי אתם עוזרים לי ואני רוכב שמים, ואז ובגאותו שחקים (שם), ומאי שחקים, הוי אומר בחדרי חדרים כדמתרגמינן ומימריה בשמי שמיא, הילכך לא על הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם אלא על כל מוצא פי ה' שהיא תורה שיצאה מפי ה' עליה יחיה האדם, וכסיל יענה עזות, עזוב עזות ולא תענה כאשר ענית, הלכך נענש, ומה עונשו כבר פירשתיו:

And by what does one do loving-kindness with his Maker? By the study of Torah; for whoever studies Torah does loving-kindness with his Maker, as it is written (Deuteronomy 33:26), 'who rides the heavens in your help', say: when you study Torah for its own sake, then you help Me, and I ride the heavens; and then 'and in His majesty the skies (shechakim)' (ibid.). And what is 'skies (shechakim)'? Say: in the innermost chambers, as we render [in the Targum], 'and His word is in the highest heavens.' Therefore, 'not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD', which is the Torah that came out from the mouth of the LORD; upon it does man live. And 'a fool answers with insolence': abandon insolence, and do not answer as you answered; therefore he was punished, and what is his punishment? I have already explained it.

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What is written (Job 15:2), ‘should a wise man answer with windy knowledge (da’at ruach)’? What is ‘windy knowledge (da’at ruach)’? Rather, knowledge that is near to the spirit (ruach), as it is written (Isaiah 11:2), ‘and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding (chokhmah u-vinah)’, wisdom, and after it understanding; and in understanding [are] counsel and might and knowledge and the fear of the LORD (etzah ve-gevurah ve-da’at ve-yirat H’). And you told us that ‘counsel (etzah)’ is the doing of loving-kindnesses, and ‘understanding (binah)’ is the measure of judgment, ‘knowledge (da’at)’ is the truth, and so [it is] the knowledge by which one tests that a man is true; ‘the fear of the LORD (yirat H’)’ is the treasury of the Torah. And this is what I say, only that this [fear] is above; for Rabbi Akiva said: all that the Holy One created, He created facing [an opposite], as it is said (Ecclesiastes 7:14), ‘God has made this over against that.’ And what is the treasury of the Torah? As it is written (Isaiah 33:6), ‘the fear of the LORD, that is his treasure.’ Therefore a man must first be one who fears Heaven, and afterward study Torah. A parable: to a man who came to buy date-honey and

מאי דכתיב (איוב ט”ו ב) החכם יענה דעת רוח, מאי ניהו דעת רוח, אלא דעת שקרוב לרוח, דכתיב (ישעי’ י”א ב) ונחה עליו רוח ה’ רוח חכמה ובינה, חכמה ואחריו בינה, ובבינה עצה וגבורה ודעת ויראת ה’, והאמרת לן שעצה זו גמילת חסדים ובינה זו מדת הדין דעת זו האמת, וכן הדעת שבה בוחן שאדם האמת, יראת ה’ היא אוצרה של תורה. והיינו דאמרי אנא אלא שזו למעלה, דאמר ר’ עקיבא כל מה שברא הקב”ה ברא לנגד שנאמר (קהלת ז’ יד) גם את זה לעומת זה עשה האלהים, ומאי ניהו אוצרה של תורה דכתיב (ישעי) י”ג יראת ה’ היא אוצרו, לפיכך צריך אדם שיהא ירא שמים תחילה ואח”כ ילמוד תורה משל לאדם שבא לקנות דבש תמרים ולא הוליך כלי להביאם אמר אביאם בחיקי, הביאם בחיקו כבד משאם עליו, פחד פן יקרעו ויתלכלכו הבגדים וזרקם בדרך, נענש שנים אחת משום הפסדן אוכלים ואחת משום איבוד ממונו:

did not bring a vessel to carry it; he said, ‘I will bring it in my bosom.’ He brought it in his bosom; its burden was heavy upon him; he feared lest [the garments] tear and the clothes be soiled, and he threw it on the road. He was punished twofold: one on account of the loss of food, and one on account of the waste of his money.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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Torah as loving-kindness with the Maker

One does ‘loving-kindness (chesed) with his Maker’ by studying Torah, ‘who rides the heavens in your help’ (Deuteronomy 33:26): ‘when you study Torah for its own sake, you help Me, and I ride the heavens.’ ‘Skies (shechakim)’ is ‘the innermost chambers’ (the Targum’s ‘His word in the highest heavens’).

'Not by bread alone… but by every word from the mouth of the LORD', the Torah is that word, and man lives by it. Sod: the study of Torah is a theurgic act that 'helps' God, draws the flow and upholds the upper world; the true life of man is the Torah, the word that proceeds from the divine mouth (cf. Chesed as the Torah, §§ 136, 149).

the seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2 and the fear of the LORD

'Windy knowledge (da'at ruach)' (Job 15:2) is 'knowledge near to the spirit', the seven spirits of 'the spirit of the LORD… wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the LORD' (Isaiah 11:2), read as the sefirot: chokhmah and binah at the head, and 'in binah' the lower attributes, counsel (etzah) = loving-kindness (Chesed); binah itself = the measure of judgment (Din / Gevurah); knowledge (da'at) = truth (the testing of what is true, Tiferet); and the fear of the LORD (yirat H') = 'the treasury of the Torah' (Isaiah 33:6, 'the fear of the LORD, that is his treasure'), the receiving grade (Malkhut / the Shekhinah). 'All that the Holy One created, He created facing an opposite' (Ecclesiastes 7:14, Rabbi Akiva). Sod: fear (the lowest grade) must come first and Torah after, as one must bring a vessel before the honey: else, like the man who carried date-honey in his bosom and threw it away,

one loses both the food and the money. (The verbatim Hebrew's numeral for 'the fear of the LORD is his treasure' is garbled; the verse is Isaiah 33:6.)

Editorial decisions

- **Isaiah 33:6 citation.** 'The fear of the LORD, that is his treasure' is Isaiah 33:6; the verbatim Hebrew's numeral is garbled (appears as 'Isaiah 13'). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 187-189; the palm of merit and the five fingers

The hand of God and the hiding of His might. The fear of the LORD as the “palm of merit” that inclines the world to mercy, the source of counsel, healing, and the stone of Israel (§ 187); the “horns from his hand” read as the five fingers of the right hand, with the singular “hand” pointing to the unity of the two (§ 188); and a terse, textually difficult close on the two arms and the fear above (§ 189).

A provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor. The Hebrew is reproduced verbatim (§ 188 cites Exodus 18:12 for the verse at 17:12; § 189’s close is flagged as obscure); the standard modern English translation (Kaplan, 1979) is under copyright.

And ‘the fear of the LORD (yirat H’)’, that which is above, it is in the palm (kaf) of the Holy One, and it is also His might; and that palm is called ‘the palm of merit (kaf zechut),’ because it inclines the world to the scale of merit. And this is what is written (Isaiah 11:3), ‘and his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears’: rather, it inclines the whole world to the scale of merit; and from there counsel goes out, and from there healing goes out to the world; and from there [is] ‘the shepherd, the stone of Israel’ (Genesis 49:24); and it is the place that is called ‘there (sham),’ as it is said (Habakkuk 3:4), ‘and there is the hiding of His might.‘

וּיִרְאַת ה’ זו היא שהיא למעלה, היא בכפו של הקב”ה, וגם היא עוזו, ואותו הכף שנקרא כף זכות משום דמטה את העולם לכף. זכות והיינו דכתיב (ישעי’ י”א ג) והריחו ביראת ה’ ולא למראה עיניו ישפוט ולא למשמע אזניו יוכיח, אלא מטה את כל העולם לכף זכות ומשם עצה יוצאה, ומשם בריאות יוצאת לעולם. ומשם רועה אבן ישראל (בראשית מ”ט כד), והוא המקום שנקרא שם שנאמר (חבקוק ג’ ד), ושם חביון עוזו:

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And when this matter came, it was sharpened. What is the sharpening? Say to us, what is ‘and horns from his hand to him (ve-karnayim mi-yado lo)’ (Habakkuk, ibid.)? And why did it say ‘horns (karnayim)’ and afterward say ‘his

וכיון שבאה מלתא זו חדדה, מאי חידודא, אימא לן מאי ניהו וקרנים מידו לו (חבקוק שם), ומאי ניהו דאמר קרניים ואח”כ אמר ידו, ידיו מיבעיא ליה, לא קשיא דהיינו דכתיב (שמות ל”ב

יט) ויחר אף משה וישלך מידיו את הלוחות וגו', מידו כתיב, והיינו דכתיב (שם י"ח יב) ויהי ידיו אמונה עד בא השמש, ולא אמר אמונות, אמרו לו רבינו אנו מקשין לך לתרץ ואתה מכסה את ענינו, למדתני רבינו משיבין על ראשון ראשון ועל אחרון אחרון, ומאי קא בעיתו, קרנים מידו לו, העבודה פרשתיו לכם עתה בתוך דברי, איכסיפו,כיון דחזינהו דאכסיפו התחיל ואמר להם והלא מים הוו ומהם יצא האש, אמרו לו דברי הבל, אם כן המים כוללים האש, רבי ומאי היא קרנים, אמר להם חמשה קרנים ה' אצבעות שביד ימינו של אדם:

hand (yado)' [in the singular], 'his hands (yadav)' it should [have said]! It is not difficult, for this is what is written (Exodus 32:19), 'and Moses' anger burned, and he cast from his hand the tablets,' and so on, 'from his hand (mi-yado)' is written; and this is what is written (Exodus 17:12), 'and his hands were faithful (va-yehi yadav emunah) until the sun set', and it did not say 'faithful ones (emunot).' They said to him: our teacher, we are raising a difficulty for you to resolve, and you [instead] cover its matter! You taught us, our teacher, that one answers the first [question] first and the last last. And what are you asking? 'Horns from his hand to him.' By the [Temple] service, I have already explained it to you, now, within my words. They were ashamed. When he saw that they were ashamed, he began and said to them: was it not water, and from them went forth fire? They said to him: [these are] words of vanity! If so, the water includes the fire. 'My teacher, and what are the horns?' He said to them: five horns, the five fingers that are on the right hand of man.

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ורבינו, את הוא דאמרת לן משמיה דר' יוחנן דאינם אלא שתי זרועות עולם, אמר להם אין, ברם הכא קרנים משמש לשתי קונים דשלמטה הימנו, ומאי ניהו, אמר להם בכעס ראשך, ומלמעלה מאי, אמר להם יראת ה':

'And, our teacher, you are the one who told us in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that they are only the two arms of the world.' He said to them: yes; but here 'horns' serves two possessors that are below it; and what are they? He said to them: in anger, the head; and from above, what? He said to them: the fear of the LORD.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

An orientation

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the fear of the LORD: the palm of merit

The ‘fear of the LORD (yirat H’)’ that is ‘above’ is ‘in the palm (kaf) of the Holy One’ and is ‘His might’; the palm is called ‘the

palm of merit (kaf zechut)' because it 'inclines the world to the scale of merit (kaf zechut)', 'his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes' (Isaiah 11:3), for it inclines all to merit. From there go 'counsel' and 'healing'; from there is 'the shepherd, the stone of Israel' (Genesis 49:24, Yesod / the tzaddik); and it is 'the place called there (sham),' 'the hiding of His might' (Habakkuk 3:4). Sod: the grade of fear (the receiving grade, the Shekhinah / the 'kaf') tips the scales toward mercy and is the source of counsel and healing and the 'stone of Israel'; the wordplay kaf zechut ('palm of merit' / 'scale of merit') binds the hand of God to the verdict of grace.

the horns and the five fingers

The students press on 'and horns from his hand to him (ve-karnayim mi-yado lo)' (Habakkuk 3:4): why 'horns,' and why 'his hand (yado)' in the singular, not 'his hands (yadav)'? The answer: Scripture writes the singular 'from his hand' even for two hands, 'he cast from his hand (mi-yado) the tablets' (Exodus 32:19, written mi-yado for both hands), 'and his hands were faithful (yadav emunah, a singular verb) until the sun set' (Exodus 17:12). After a sharp exchange, and a hint that the two are water and fire together, the master resolves: the 'horns' are 'five horns, the five fingers of the right hand of man.' Sod: the 'horns' are the fingers of the divine right hand (the giving side),

the rays of power (Habakkuk's 'horns / rays from His hand'); the singular 'hand' points to the unity of the two hands in the one act (cf. the ten fingers and the ten sefirot, § 124).

the two arms and the fear above

The students recall the teaching in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that the 'horns / arms' are 'only the two arms of the world.' The master answers: yes, but here 'horns' serves two 'possessors (konim)' below it, and, tersely and obscurely, 'in anger, the head; and from above, the fear of the LORD.' Sod: the reading is compressed and its exact sense uncertain in the manuscript; the drift is that the 'horns' (the two arms, Chesed and Gevurah / the right and left) stand between what is below them and 'the fear of the LORD' above, the ordering of the grades around the two arms of the divine 'body.' (The phrase rendered 'in anger, the head' is difficult and given as the source has it.)

Editorial decisions

- **Exodus 17:12 citation.** 'And his hands were faithful until the sun set' is Exodus 17:12; the source cites it as Exodus 18:12 (a het/zayin slip, 18 for 17). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.
- **section 189 obscure phrase.** The close of section 189 ('in anger, the head; and from above, the fear of the LORD') is

compressed and textually difficult; rendered as the source gives it, with the uncertainty flagged in the apparatus rather than smoothed over.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 190-191; the first light and the rejected stone

The great themes gathered into one. The first light hidden for the righteous, refracted into a precious stone adorned with all the commandments, distributed as the measures of the patriarchs, Abraham's loving-kindness, Isaac's dread, Jacob's truth and peace, so that the stone the builders rejected becomes the cornerstone (§ 190); and Abraham as living loving-kindness, who "made the world meritorious, even the guilty," so that "one who comes to purify himself is helped" (§ 191).

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ומאי ניהו יראת ה', האור הראשון דאמר ר' מאי דכתיב (בראשית א' ג) ויאמר אלהים ויהי אור ויהי אור, ולא אמר ויהי כן, אלא מלמד שהאור ההוא היה גדול מאד ואין כל בריה יכולה להסתכל בו גנזו הקב"ה לצדיקים לעתיד לבוא, והיא מדת כל סחורה שבעולם, והיא כח אבן יקרה שקורין סוחרת ודר, ועל מה היא מדת דר, אלא מלמד שלקח הקב"ה מזיווה אחד מאלפים ובנה ממנה אבן יקרה נאה ומקושטת וכלל בה כל המצות. ובא אברהם ובקש כח לתת לו ונתנו לו אבן יקרה זו, ולא רצה אותה, זכה ולקח מדתו החסד דכתיב (מיכה ז' כ) חסד לאברהם, בא יצחק ובקש כח ונתנו לו ולא רצה בה זכה ונטל מדת הגבורה דהיינו הפחד דכתיב (בראשית ל"א נג) וישבע יעקב בפחד אביו יצחק, בא יעקב ורצה בה ולא נתנוה לו, אמרו לו הואיל ואברהם למעלה ויצחק תחתיו אתה תהיה באמצע ותטול שלשתן, ומאי ניהו אמצע, היינו שלום, והכתיב (מיכה שם) תתן אמת ליעקב, י אמת ושלום חד הוי כד"א (אסתר ט' ל) דברי שלום ואמת, (מ"ב כ' יט) כי אם שלום ואמת יהיה בימי, והיינו דכתיב (ישעי' נ"ח יד)

And what is 'the fear of the LORD'? The first light, of which Rabbi [Meir] said: what is written (Genesis 1:3), 'and God said, let there be light, and there was light,' and it did not say 'and it was so'? Rather, it teaches that that light was very great, and no creature could gaze upon it; the Holy One hid it for the righteous in the time to come. And it is the measure of all the merchandise in the world; and it is the power of a precious stone that is called 'socheret and dar.' And on what account is it the measure of 'dar'? Rather, it teaches that the Holy One took one part in a thousand of its radiance and built from it a precious stone, fair and adorned, and included in it all the commandments. And Abraham came and asked that a power be given to him, and this precious stone was given to him, and he did not want it; he merited and took his measure, loving-kindness (chesed), as it is written (Micah 7:20), 'loving-kindness to Abraham.' Isaac came and asked for a power, and it was given to him, and he did not want it; he merited and took the measure of might (gevurah), which is the dread, as it is written (Genesis 31:53), 'and Jacob swore by the Dread of his father Isaac.' Jacob came and wanted it, and it was not

והאכלתיך נחלת יעקב אביך, דהיינו נחלה גמורה דאית ליה החס"ד והפח"ד והאמ"ת והשלו"ם ולפיכך אמר (תהלים קי"ח כב) אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פנה, אבן שמאסו אברהם ויצחק שבנו את העולם היתה עתה לראש פנה:

given to him; they said to him: since Abraham is above and Isaac beneath him, you shall be in the middle and take [of] the three of them. And what is 'the middle'? It is peace (shalom); and it is written (Micah, ibid.), 'you give truth to Jacob', truth and peace are one, as it is said (Esther 9:30), 'words of peace and truth,' [and] (2 Kings 20:19), 'for there shall be peace and truth in my days.' And this is what is written (Isaiah 58:14), 'and I will feed you the inheritance of Jacob your father', that is, a complete inheritance that has the loving-kindness and the dread and the truth and the peace. And therefore it says (Psalm 118:22), 'the stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner': the stone that Abraham and Isaac, who built the world, rejected, has now become the head of the corner.

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ולמה מאסו בה והלא נאמר (בראשית כ"ו ה) עקב אשר שמע אברהם בקולי וישמור משמרתי מצותי חקותי ותורותי, מאי משמרתי, כך אמרה מדת החסד

And why did they reject it? Is it not said (Genesis 26:5), 'because Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and

My teachings'? What is 'My charge'? Thus said the measure of loving-kindness (chesed): all the days that Abraham was in the world, I did not need to do my work, for Abraham stood there in my place and 'kept my charge'; for this is my work, that I make the world meritorious, and even if they are guilty I make them meritorious; and moreover I turn them and bring [it] into their hearts to do the will of their Father in heaven. And all this Abraham did, as it is written (Genesis 21:33), 'and he planted a tamarisk in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God', he arranged his bread and his water for all who come into the world, and made them meritorious, and spoke to their hearts: whom do you serve? Serve the LORD, the God of heaven and earth; and he expounded to them until they repented. And whence [do we know] that he made even the guilty meritorious? As it is said (Genesis 18:17), 'shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? And Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him': rather, I will make him meritorious, for I knew that he would seek mercy for them and make [them] meritorious. And is it possible to say that the Holy One

כל ימי היות אברהם בעולם לא הוצרכתי אני לעשות מלאכתי שהרי אברהם עמד שם במקומי וישמור משמרתי, כי אני זאת מלאכתי שאני מזכה את העולם ואפי' נתחייבו אני מזכה אותם, ועוד משיבם ומביא בלבם לעשות רצון אביהם שבשמים, וכל זה עשה אברהם דכתיב (שם כ"א לג) ויטע אשל בבאר שבע ויקרא שם בשם ה' אל עולם, סדר לחמו ומימיו לכל באי עולם והיה מזכה אותם ומדבר על לבם למי אתם עובדים, עבדו את ה' אלהי השמים והארץ, והיה דורש להם עד שהיו שבים, ומנא לן שאף החייבים היה מזכה שנאמר (שם י"ח י"ז) המכסה אני מאברהם אשר אני עושה ואברהם היו יהיה לגוי גדול ועצום ונברכו בו כל גויי הארץ, אלא אזכהו שידעתי שיבקש עליהם רחמים ויזכה, וכי אפשר לומר שלא ידע הקב"ה שלא יוכלו להנצל, אלא לזכותו קאמר, מכאן אמרו הבא ליטהר מסייעין לו, הבא ליטמא פותחין לו, מאי פותחין לו, אותן הפתוחים תמיד:

did not know that they could not be saved? Rather, [it was] to make him meritorious that He said [it]. From here they said: one who comes to purify himself is helped; one who comes to defile himself is given an opening. What is 'given an opening'? Those [doors] that are always open.

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the first light, the precious stone, and the patriarchs

'The fear of the LORD' is the first light (Genesis 1:3), too great for any creature, hidden for the righteous (the or ha-ganuz, §§ 147, 160), 'the measure of all merchandise,' the power of a precious stone called 'socheret and dar.' From a thousandth of its radiance the Holy One built a precious stone 'including all

the commandments,' offered to the patriarchs. Abraham took the measure of loving-kindness (Chesed; Micah 7:20), Isaac the measure of might / dread (Gevurah; Genesis 31:53); Jacob, 'in the middle,' took of all three, 'peace,' for 'truth and peace are one' (Esther 9:30; 2 Kings 20:19), 'the inheritance of Jacob' (Isaiah 58:14) that holds chesed, dread, truth, and peace (Tiferet). Sod: the primordial light, refracted into the precious stone (the Shekhinah / Malkhut, adorned with all the commandments), is distributed as the measures of the patriarchs; the 'stone the builders rejected' (Psalm 118:22), rejected by Abraham and Isaac who 'built the world', becomes the cornerstone (the last grade, or Jacob / Tiferet, completing the structure).

Abraham's loving-kindness: making the world meritorious

Why did Abraham and Isaac 'reject' the stone? Because 'Abraham kept My charge' (Genesis 26:5): the measure of loving-kindness itself says that while Abraham lived, 'I did not need to do my work, for Abraham stood in my place', for its work is 'to make the world meritorious (mezakeh), even the guilty,' turning hearts to the Father in heaven. Abraham did just this: 'he planted a tamarisk in Beersheba and called on the name of the LORD' (Genesis 21:33), feeding all comers and drawing

them to God. Even the guilty of Sodom he made meritorious, ‘shall I hide from Abraham what I do?’ (Genesis 18:17), God ‘made him meritorious’ by letting him plead. Hence: ‘one who comes to purify himself is helped; one who comes to defile himself is given an opening’ (Shabbat 104a), the open doors always standing. Sod: Abraham embodies Chesed, the grade that acquits and draws the world to good; the human tzaddik enacts the measure, and the closing maxim frames the whole book’s ethic: the turn toward purity is met and helped from above.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 192-193; the kept teachings and the stone of Israel

Abraham and the grade of the righteous. Because Abraham kept even “My teachings”, the rulings and dialectics of the heavenly academy, the whole Oral Torah (§ 192); and the stone of Israel nourished from the supernal righteous one (Yesod), the great hidden light, “socheret,” with the stone “dar” set below, and the horns as the five fingers of the right hand (§ 193).

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מצותי חקותי ותורותי (שם כ"ו ה) אמר הואיל ולא חפצתי בה אשמור מצותיה, ומאי תורתי, אלא אפי' הוראת ופלפולין שמורין למעלה הוא ידעם וקיימם:

'My commandments, My statutes, and My teachings' (Genesis 26:5), he said: since I did not desire it, I will keep its commandments. And what is 'My teachings (torotai)'? Rather, even the rulings and the [dialectical] argumentations that are kept above, he knew them and fulfilled them.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי משם רועה אבן ישראל (בראשית מ"ט כד) שמשם נזון אבן ישראל ומאי משם, הוי אומר צדיק עליון, ומה הוא היינו האור הגדול הצפון, והיינו סוחרת, והאבן שדרה למטה הימנה נקרא דר, ומאי הוא קרנים שנאמר (חבקוק ג' ד) קרנים מידו לו, היינו חמש אצבעות של יד ימין:

And what is 'from there the shepherd, the stone of Israel' (Genesis 49:24)? That from there the stone of Israel is nourished. And what is 'from there'? Say: the supernal righteous one (tzaddik elyon). And what is it? It is the great hidden light; and it is 'socheret,' and the stone that is set below it is called 'dar.' And what are the 'horns'? As it is said (Habakkuk 3:4), 'horns from his hand to him': these are the five fingers of the right hand.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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Abraham kept even the teachings above

Continuing § 191: because Abraham ‘kept My commandments, My statutes, and My teachings’ (Genesis 26:5), the measure of loving-kindness says ‘since I did not desire [the stone], I will keep its commandments.’ ‘My teachings (torotai)’, in the plural, includes ‘even the rulings and the [dialectical] argumentations (pilpulin) that are kept above’: Abraham ‘knew them and fulfilled them.’ Sod: Abraham kept not only the written commandments but the whole Oral Torah, the very reasoning of the heavenly academy (the rabbinic tradition that the patriarchs observed the entire Torah before it was given, Yoma 28b).

the stone of Israel: the supernal righteous one and the hidden light

’From there the shepherd, the stone of Israel’ (Genesis 49:24): ‘the stone of Israel is nourished’ from ‘the supernal righteous one (tzaddik elyon)’, Yesod, which is ‘the great hidden light’ (the or ha-ganuz, §§ 147, 190) and ‘socheret’; the ‘stone set below it’ is ‘dar’: the precious stone of § 190, the Shekhinah / Malkhut. And the ‘horns’ of Habakkuk 3:4 are again ‘the five fingers of the right hand’ (§ 188). Sod: the tzaddik (Yesod) is the channel of the hidden light to the last grade (the stone / Malkhut), which it nourishes; socheret and dar name the two grades, the giving and the receiving.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 194-195; why the righteous suffer

The book's clearest answer to the problem of evil. Moses' unanswered question, why the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper, the innermost working of the divine thought he could not reach (§ 194); and the answer through the transmigration of souls: the suffering righteous was wicked in a former life, the soul replanted like a vineyard again and again, to a thousand generations (§ 195).

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אמר רבי רחומאי כך קבלתי כשבקש משה לדעת ידיעת השם הנכבד והנורא יתʼ ואמר (שמות ל"ג יח) הראיני נא את כבודך, בקש לדעת מפני מה צדיק וטוב לו צדיק ורע לו, ורשע וטוב לו רשע ורע לו ולא הודיעוהו. ולא הודיעוהו סלקא דעתך, אלא לא הודיעוהו מה שבקש, וכי תעלה על דעתך שמשה לא היה יודע סוד זה אלא כך אמר משה דרכי הכחות אני יודע אבל איני יודע איך המחשבה מתפשטת בה, יודע אני שבמחשבה האמת אבל לא ידעתי חלקיו ובקשו לדעת ולא הודיעוהו:

Rabbi Rechumai said: thus I received, when Moses sought to know the knowledge of the honored and awesome Name, blessed be He, and said (Exodus 33:18), 'show me, I pray, Your glory,' he sought to know why [there is] a righteous one and it is good for him, a righteous one and it is bad for him, a wicked one and it is good for him, a wicked one and it is bad for him, and they did not inform him. 'They did not inform him': does it enter your mind? Rather, they did not inform him what he sought. And would it enter your mind that Moses did not know this secret? Rather, thus said Moses: I know the ways of the powers, but I do not know how the thought (machashavah) spreads within it; I know that in the thought is the truth, but I did not know its portions. And he sought to know, and they did not inform him.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

מפני מה צדיק וטוב לו צדיק ורע לו, מפני שהצדיק הזה כבר היה רשע לשעבר ועתה נענש, וכי

Why [is there] a righteous one and it is good for him, a righteous one and it is bad for him? Because this

מענשין על ימי הנערות, והאמר ר' סימון שאין מענשין בבית דין של מעלה אלא מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה, אמר ליה אנא לא בחיי אמרי, אנא דאמרי שכבר היה לשעבר אמרו לו חביריו עד מתי תסתום דבריך, אמר להם צאו וראו משל למה"ד לאדם שנטע בגנו כרם ויקו לעשות ענבים ויעש באושים, ראה שלא הצליח נטעו גדרו ופרצו ונקה הגפנים מן הבאושים ונטעו עוד שנית ראה שלא הצליח גדרו נטעו אחר שנקה וראה שלא הצליח ועקרו ונטעו עד כמה, א"ל לאלף דור דכתיב (תהלים ק"ה ח) דבר צוה לאלף דור, והיינו דאמרו, תתקע"ד דורות חסרו ועמד הקב"ה ושתלן בכל דור ודור:

righteous one was already wicked in the past, and is now punished. And do they punish for the days of youth? Did not Rabbi Simon say that they do not punish in the heavenly court except from the age of twenty and above? He said to him: I did not say in his [present] life; I say [regarding] that he already was [wicked] in the past. His colleagues said to him: how long will you conceal your words? He said to them: go out and see. A parable: to what is it comparable? To a man who planted a vineyard in his garden and hoped it would make grapes, and it made wild grapes (be'ushim); he saw that it did not succeed; he planted it, fenced it, breached it, and cleaned the vines from the wild grapes, and planted it again a second time; he saw that it did not succeed; he fenced it, planted it after he cleaned it, and saw that it did not succeed, and uprooted it and planted it. Until how many [times]? He said to him: to a thousand generations, as it is written (Psalm 105:8), 'the word He commanded to a thousand generations'; and this is what they said: nine hundred and seventy-four generations were lacking, and the Holy One arose and planted them in each and every generation.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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Moses' question: why the righteous suffer

When Moses said 'show me, I pray, Your glory' (Exodus 33:18), he sought (per the rabbinic reading, Berakhot 7a) to know the deepest problem: 'a righteous one, and it is good for him; a righteous one, and it is bad for him; a wicked one, and it is good for him; a wicked one, and it is bad for him', the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the just. 'And they did not inform him', not that Moses was ignorant, but that this was withheld: Moses says 'I know the ways of the powers, but I do not know how the thought (machashavah) spreads within it, I know that in the thought is the truth, but I did not know its portions.' Sod: Moses grasped the grades (the 'powers'/sefirot)

but not the innermost workings of the divine thought (Chokhmah / Keter) in which the true reason for each person's lot is held.

the answer: the transmigration of souls (gilgul)

The answer, withheld from Moses but here disclosed, is the transmigration of souls (gilgul): 'this righteous one who suffers was already wicked in the past, and is now punished' for a former life (not for the sins of his youth, which the heavenly court does not punish before twenty, Shabbat 89b). A parable: a man plants a vineyard that yields only wild grapes (be'ushim); he fences, breaches, cleans, uproots, and replants, again and again. 'Until how many times? To a thousand generations' (Psalm 105:8), and since 'nine hundred and seventy-four generations were lacking' before the Torah was given (Chagigah 13b), 'the Holy One planted them in each and every generation.' Sod: the soul is replanted across lives until it bears good fruit; the suffering of the righteous and the ease of the wicked are the just accounting of former lives, the Bahir's clearest use of gilgul to answer theodicy (see the reused garments, § 122, and the treasury of souls, § 184).

Sefer ha-Bahir § 196; the golem, the soul, and the Torah as bride

Three great themes in one passage. The golem, the righteous could create a world, but for iniquity, and Rava's created man cannot speak because its maker's soul is not pure; David killing the evil inclination by ceaseless study, joining the Torah of above; and the Torah as the bride, the betrothed of the Holy One, who is Israel's inheritance only when they study her for her own sake (§ 196).

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אמר רבה אי בעי צדיקי ברו עלמא מי מבדיל, עונותיכם, דכתיב (ישעי' נ"ט ב) כי אם עונותיכם היו מבדילים ביניכם לבין אלהיכם, הא אם לא היו עונותיכם לא היה הפרש ביניכם ובינו, דהא רבא, ברא גברא שדריה לקמיה דר' זירא הוי קא משתעי בהדיה ולא קא מהדר, ואלמלא עונותיכם הוה מהדר, וממאי הוה מהדר, מנשמתיה, ומי הוי ליה לאינש נשמתא למיעל ביה, אין, דכתיב (בראשית ג' ז) ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים, ולאינש הוה ליה נשמת חיים, ואלמלא עונותיכם שאין הנשמה טהורה, והיינו הפרש שיש ביניכם לבינו דכתיב (תהלים ח' ו) ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים, מאי מעט, דאית ליה עונות, והקב"ה לית ליה, וברוך הוא ומבורך שמו לעדי עד, עונות הוא דלית ליה אבל יצר מיהו מניה אתי, אתי סלקא דעתך, אלא אימא הוה קאתי מניה עד דאתי דוד והרגו הה"ד (תהלים ק"ט כב) ולבי חלל בקרבי, כך אמר דוד הואיל ולא יכלתי לו, לא יגורך רע (שם ה' ה), ובמה יכל לו דוד, בגרסתו, שלא היה שותק לילה ויום, והיה מחבר תורה של מעלה, כי כל שעה שאדם לומד תורה לשמה התורה של מעלה

Rabbah said: if the righteous wished, they could create a world; what separates? Your iniquities, as it is written (Isaiah 59:2), 'but your iniquities have separated between you and your God', thus, if your iniquities were not [there], there would be no difference between you and Him. For Rava created a man [and] sent him before Rabbi Zeira; he was speaking to him, and he did not answer; and were it not for your iniquities, he would have answered. And from what would he have answered? From his soul. And does a man have a soul to put into it? Yes, as it is written (Genesis 2:7), 'and He breathed into his nostrils the soul of life.' And a man has the soul of life; and were it not for your iniquities, for the soul is not pure, this is the difference between you and Him, as it is written (Psalm 8:6), 'and You made him lack a little from God.' What is 'a little'? That he has iniquities, and the Holy One does not; and blessed is He and blessed is His Name for ever and ever. It is iniquities that He does not have, but the [evil] inclination, however, comes from Him. 'Comes from Him', does it enter your mind? Rather say: it used to come from Him, until David came and killed it; this is what is written (Psalm 109:22), 'and my heart is slain within me', thus said David: since I

could not [prevail] against it, [I made it that] 'evil shall not dwell with You' (Psalm 5:5). And by what did David prevail against it? By his study, for he did not keep silent night or day, and he would join the Torah of above; for every hour that a man studies Torah for its own sake, the Torah of above is joined to the Holy One. And this is what we say: let a man always study Torah, even not for its own sake, for out of [studying] not for its own sake he comes to [study] for its own sake. And what is the Torah of which you spoke? It is the bride (kalah), who is adorned and crowned and included in all the commandments, and she is the treasury of the Torah, and she is the betrothed (arusah) of the Holy One, as it is written (Deuteronomy 33:4), 'the Torah that Moses commanded us is the inheritance (morashah) of the congregation of Jacob': do not read 'inheritance (morashah)' but 'betrothed (me'orasah).' How so? When Israel are engaged in Torah for its own sake, she is the betrothed of the Holy One; and at the time she is the betrothed of the Holy One, she is the inheritance of Israel.

מתחברת להקב"ה, והיינו דאמרינן לעולם ילמוד אדם תורה ואפי' שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה, ומאי ניהו תורה דאמרת, היינו כלה שמקושטת ומעוטרת ומוכללת בכל המצות, והיא אוצר התורה, והיא ארוסתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא דכתיב (דברים ל"ג ד) תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב, אל תקרי מורשה אלא מאורסה. הא כיצד כשישראל עוסקים בתורה לשמה היא ארוסתו של הקב"ה, ובזמן שהיא ארוסתו של הקב"ה היא מורשה לישראל:

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the golem, the soul, and the separating iniquities

'If the righteous wished, they could create a world', only 'your iniquities separate' (Isaiah 59:2); without them 'there would be no difference between you and Him.' The proof: 'Rava created a man (gavra)' and sent it to Rabbi Zeira, who spoke to it and it could not answer, for 'from what would it have answered? From its soul,' and man's soul (Genesis 2:7, 'He breathed the soul of life') is not pure because of iniquities; 'You made him lack a little from God' (Psalm 8:6), the 'little' being iniquity, which God does not have. Sod: this is the earliest Kabbalistic telling of the golem (the artificial man of Sanhedrin 65b), the righteous, cleansed of iniquity, share the creative power, but the golem cannot speak because its maker's soul is not wholly pure; the gap between the human creator and the divine is sin, not power.

David and the inclination; the Torah as the bride

The evil inclination (yetzer) ‘came from Him’, until David ‘killed it’: ‘my heart is slain within me’ (Psalm 109:22), for since he could not overcome it, he made it that ‘evil shall not dwell with You’ (Psalm 5:5). And David prevailed by his study (girsa), never silent day or night, ‘joining the Torah of above,’ for ‘every hour a man studies Torah for its own sake (lishmah), the Torah above is joined to the Holy One’, so ‘let a man always study Torah even not for its own sake, for from not-for-its-own-sake he comes to for-its-own-sake’ (Pesachim 50b). And that Torah is ‘the bride (kalah), adorned, crowned, included in all the commandments, the treasury of the Torah, the betrothed (arusah) of the Holy One’: ‘the inheritance (morashah) of the congregation of Jacob’ (Deuteronomy 33:4) read ‘the betrothed (me’orasah).’ Sod: the Torah is the Shekhinah, the bride, when Israel study for its own sake she is the Holy One’s betrothed, and only then is she Israel’s inheritance; study for its own sake is the wedding of the King and the bride.

Editorial decisions

- **Genesis 2:7 citation.** ‘And He breathed into his nostrils the soul of life’ is Genesis 2:7; the source cites it as Genesis 3:7 (which is ‘the eyes of both were opened’). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 197-198; Tamar and the male and female

Tamar and the male and female. Her twins read as the moon (Peretz, breached and rebuilt) and the sun (Zerach, constant), with the Davidic line running through the moon that is broken and restored (§ 197); and the date-palm, and Adam, and the divine image all “including male and female”, the primordial androgynous unity, unfolded by the three verbs of creation at the making of the soul (§ 198).

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ישב רבי אמוראי, ודרש מפני מה זכתה תמר ויצאו ממנה פרץ וזרח, מפני שהיה שמה תמר, והא תמר אחות אמנון, היא דעבידא לכך, ומאי טעמא אקרי פרץ וזרח, פרץ איקרי על שם הלבנה, שהלבנה נפרצת לעתים ונבנית לעתיד, וזרח איקרי על שם החמה, שהחמה זורחת תמיד בענין אחד, והא פרץ היה הבכור וחמה גדולה מן הלבנה, לא קשיא דהא כתיב (בראשית ל"ח כח) ויתן יד, וכתיב (שם) ואחר יצא אחיו אשר על ידו השני ויקרא שמו זרח, דהוא היה לו להיות הבכור, ומפני שמחת הקב"ה שצפה שעתיד לצאת ממנו שלמה, שעתיד לומר שיר השירים החזירו:

Rabbi Amorai sat and expounded: why did Tamar merit that Peretz and Zerach came out from her? Because her name was Tamar. But Tamar [was] the sister of Amnon! She was made for this [purpose]. And why were they called Peretz and Zerach? Peretz was called on account of the moon, for the moon is breached at times and is built up in the future; and Zerach was called on account of the sun, for the sun shines always in one manner. But Peretz was the firstborn, and the sun is greater than the moon! It is not difficult, for it is written (Genesis 38:28), 'and [one] put out a hand,' and it is written (ibid.), 'and afterward his brother came out, on whose hand was the scarlet thread, and his name was called Zerach': [Zerach] should have been the firstborn; and because of the joy of the Holy One, who foresaw that Solomon would come out from him [Peretz], who would speak the Song of Songs, He returned him [and made Peretz first].

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)

ומאי טעמא אקריאת תמר ולא שאר שמות, מפני שהיא נקבה, נקבה סלקא דעתך, אלא מפני שכוללת זכר ונקבה, דכל אילני תמרים כלולים זכר ונקבה, והאיך, שהלולב הוי זכר, והפרי מבחוץ הוי זכר ומבפנים הוי נקבה, והאיך, בגרעיני התמר שהיא סדוקה כעין אשה, כנגדה כח הלבנה למעלה, והקב"ה ברא אדם זכר ונקבה שנאמר (בראשית א' כז) זכר ונקבה ברא אותם, אפשר לומר כך, והא כתיב (שם) ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלהים ברא אותו, ואחר כך (שם ב' יח) אעשה לו עזר כנגדו, (שם כא) ויקח אחת מצלעותיו ויסגור בשר תחתינה, אלא אימא כתיב בהם יצירה וכתיב עשיה וכתיב בריאה בעת עשיית הנשמה, עשיה זכר ונקבה בראם, יצירה בעת הרכיב הנשמה על הגוף, ואסף הרוח, ומנא לן דהאי יצירה לישנא דאסיפה דכתיב (שם יט) וייצר ה' אלהים מן האדמה כל חית השדה ואת כל עוף השמים ויבא אל האדם לראות מה יקרא לו וגו' והיינו דכתיב (שם ה' ב) זכר ונקיבה בראם, וכתיב (שם ה' כח) ויברך אותם אלהים:

And why was she called Tamar and not other names? Because she is female. 'Female,' does it enter your mind? Rather, because she includes male and female, for all date-palm trees include male and female. And how? For the lulav is male, and the fruit, from outside it is male and from inside it is female. And how? In the seeds of the date, which is split like a woman; corresponding to it [is] the power of the moon above. And the Holy One created the man male and female, as it is said (Genesis 1:27), 'male and female He created them.' Is it possible to say so? But it is written (ibid.), 'and God created the man in His image, in the image of God He created him,' and afterward (Genesis 2:18), 'I will make him a helper corresponding to him,' (ibid. 21), 'and He took one of his ribs and closed up flesh in its place'? Rather, say: it is written of them 'formation (yetzirah),' and it is written 'making (asiyah),' and it is written 'creation (beriah)' at the time of the making of the soul. 'Making (asiyah)', 'male and female He created them'; 'formation (yetzirah)': at the time of the mounting of the soul upon the body, and the gathering of the spirit. And whence [do we know] that this 'formation (yetzirah)' is a term of gathering? As it is written

(Genesis 2:19), ‘and the LORD God formed from the ground every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens, and brought [them] to the man to see what he would call them,’ and so on; and this is what is written (Genesis 5:2), ‘male and female He created them,’ and it is written (ibid.), ‘and God blessed them.’

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

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Tamar, Peretz and Zerach: the moon and the sun

Tamar (the palm) merited Peretz and Zerach because ‘she was made for this.’ The names are read: Peretz for the moon, which is ‘breached (nifretzet)’ and waning yet ‘built up in the future’; Zerach for the sun, which ‘shines (zorachat)’ constantly. Zerach put out his hand first (Genesis 38:28-30) and ‘should have been

the firstborn' (the sun greater than the moon), but the Holy One, foreseeing that Solomon (who would sing the Song of Songs) would descend from Peretz, 'returned' Peretz to be first. Sod: the moon is the Shekhinah / Malkhut (waning and restored), the sun the masculine grade (Tiferet); the Davidic-messianic line runs through Peretz, the 'moon' that is broken and rebuilt, the exile and restoration of the Shekhinah (cf. the king's daughter, § 54).

the palm as male and female; the three verbs of creation

Tamar is named for the date-palm because the palm 'includes male and female', the lulav male, the fruit male without and female within, the split seed 'like a woman,' answering to 'the power of the moon above.' So too the Holy One 'created the man male and female' (Genesis 1:27), reconciled with the later 'helper' and 'rib' (Genesis 2:18, 21) by the three verbs: 'creation (beriah),' 'making (asiyah),' 'formation (yetzirah).' 'Making' is 'male and female He created them'; 'formation (yetzirah)' is the mounting of the soul on the body, and yetzirah is 'a term of gathering (asifah),' as 'the LORD God formed (va-yitzer)... and gathered them to the man' (Genesis 2:19); 'male and female He created them... and God blessed them' (Genesis 5:2). Sod: the androgynous unity of male and female, in the palm, in Adam, in

the divine ‘image’, is the primordial state; the grades too are male and female joined, the moon (Malkhut) and the sun (Tiferet). (The verbatim Hebrew cites the last clause, ‘and God blessed them,’ as Genesis 5:28; it is at 5:2.)

Editorial decisions

- **Genesis 5:2 citation.** ‘And God blessed them’ is part of Genesis 5:2 (as is ‘male and female He created them’); the source cites it as Genesis 5:28 (which is ‘Lamech lived…’). Rendered at the correct locus with the slip noted.

Sefer ha-Bahir §§ 199-200; the serpent and the fall (the close of the book)

The close of the Sefer ha-Bahir. The serpent seizing Eve through her soul's "north side" (§ 199); and the fall in full, Samael riding the serpent, the two words Eve added to God's command, the stripped "skin of nail," the nine curses, Samael made prince of Edom: all traced to a single addition to the received word, sealed by the book's final maxim, "whoever adds, diminishes," and closed with a blessing that the light of the Torah be given to the reader (§ 200).

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נשמת נקבה מן הנקבה ונשמת זכר מן הזכר, והיינו דקאזיל נחש בתרה דחוה, אמר הואיל ונשמתה מצד צפון. אסיתנה מהרה, ומאי הסתה הוה בה, משום דבא עליה:

The soul of the female is from the female, and the soul of the male is from the male. And this is why the serpent went after Eve; he said: since her soul is from the north side, I will seduce her quickly. And what seduction was there in her? Because he came upon her.

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שאלו תלמידיו אימא לן עובדא היכי הוה, אמר להם סמאל הרשע קשר עם כל צבאות מעלה על רבו, משום שאמר הקב"ה ורדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים, אמר האיך נוכל להחטיאו ולגרשהו מלפניו, ירד עם כל חיילותיו וביקש לו בארץ חבר כמותו, ומצא הנחש, והיה לו דמות גמל ורכב עליו, והלך לו אל האשה אמר לה (בראשית ג' א) אף כי אמר אלהים מכל עץ הגן, אבל אבקש יותר ואוסיף כדי שתגרע היא, אמרה לא מנענו אלא מפרי עץ אשר בתוך הגן אמר אלהים לא תאכלו ממנו ולא תגעו בו פן תמותון, והוסיפה שתי דברים,

His students asked: tell us how the matter happened. He said to them: Samael the wicked made a bond with all the hosts above against his Master, because the Holy One said, 'and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens.' He said: how can we cause him to sin and banish him from before Him? He descended with all his hosts and sought for himself on earth a companion like himself, and found the serpent, and it had the likeness of a camel, and he rode upon it, and went to the woman. He said to her (Genesis 3:1), 'even though God said, of every tree of the garden?', but I will ask more and add, so that she will diminish [it]. She said: we were not

restrained except from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden; God said, 'you shall not eat of it and you shall not touch it, lest you die.' And she added two things: she said 'and from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden,' and it had only said 'and from the tree of knowledge'; and she said 'you shall not touch it, lest you die.' What did Samael the wicked do? He went and touched the tree; and the tree cried out and said: wicked one, do not touch me! as it is said (Psalm 36:12), 'let not the foot of pride come upon me, and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away', 'there the workers of iniquity have fallen, they are thrust down and cannot rise.' He went and said to the woman: behold, I have touched the tree and did not die; you too, touch it and you will not die. The woman went and touched the tree, and she saw the angel of death coming toward her. She said: woe is me, now I will die, and the Holy One will make another woman and give her to Adam; rather, behold, I will cause him to eat with me, if we die, we both die, and if we live, we both live. And she took and ate from the fruits of the tree, and gave also to her husband. His eyes were opened and his teeth were set on edge. He said to her: what is this that you have fed me, that my teeth are set

אמרה ומפרי העץ אשר בתוך הגן ולא נאמר אלא ומעץ הדעת, ואמרה לא תגעו בו פן תמותון, מה עשה סמאל הרשע, הלך ונגע באילן, והיה האילן צווח ואומר רשע אל תגע בו שנאמר (תהלים ל"ו יב) אל תבואני רגל גאוה ויד רשעים אל תנדני, שם נפלו פועלי און דחו ולא יכלו קום, הלך ואמר לאשה הנה נגעתי באילן ולא מתי אף אתה געי בו ולא תמותי, הלכה האשה ונגעה באילן, וראתה מלאך המות שבא כנגדה, אמרה אוי לי עכשיו אני מתה והקב"ה עושה אשה אחרת ונותנה לאדם, אלא הריני גורמת לו שיאכל עמי אם נמות נמות שנינו ואם נחיו נחיו שנינו, ולקחה ואכלה מפירות האילן ונתנה גם לבעלה, נתפקחו עיניו וקהו שיניו, אמר לה מהו זה שהאכלתני שהקהו שני כך קהו שני כל הדורות, ישב לו בדין אמת שנאמר (תהלים ט' ה) שופט צדק, קרא לאדם אומר לו למה ברחת מפני, אמר לו את קולך שמעתי בגן ורעדו עצמותי, ואירא כי עירום אנכי ואחבא (בראשית ג' י), כי עירום אנכי מפועלי, כי ערום אנכי מצווי, כי ערום אנכי ממעשי שנאמר (שם) כי ערום אנכי ואחבא, מה היה לבושו של אדם עור של צפורן, כיון שאכל מפירות האילן הפשיט את עורו

on edge? Just as my teeth are set on edge, so are the teeth of all the generations set on edge. He sat in true judgment, as it is said (Psalm 9:5), 'a righteous judge.' He called to Adam, saying to him: why did you flee from before Me? He said to Him: I heard Your voice in the garden and my bones trembled, 'and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid' (Genesis 3:10), because I am naked of my works, because I am naked of Your commandment, because I am naked of my deeds, as it is said (ibid.), 'because I am naked, and I hid.' What was Adam's garment? A skin of nail. When he ate from the fruits of the tree, the skin of nail was stripped from him, and he saw himself naked, as it is said (Genesis 3:11), 'who told you that you are naked?' Adam said before the Holy One: Master of all the worlds, when I was by myself, did I sin against You? Rather, the woman whom You brought to me, she pushed me away from Your words, as it is said (Genesis 3:12), 'the woman whom You gave [to be] with me.' The Holy One said to her: is it not enough that you sinned, but you caused Adam to sin as well? She said before Him: Master of all the worlds, the serpent seduced me to sin before You. He brought the three of them and decreed upon them the

של צפורן מעליו, ראה עצמו ערום שנאמר (שם יא) מי הגיד לך כי עירום אתה, אמר אדם לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא רבון כל העולמים כשהייתי לבדי שמא חטאתי לך אלא האשה שהבאת אצלי היא הדיחה אותי מדבריך שנאמר (שם יב) האשה אשר נתת עמדי, אמר לה הקב"ה לא דייך שחטאת אלא החטאית את אדם, אמרה לפניו רבון כל העולמים הנחש השיאני לחטוא לפניך מביא שלשתן וגזר עליהם דין תשע קללות ומות, והפיל את סמאל הרשע ואת הכת שלו ממקום קדושו מן השמים, וקצץ רגליו של נחש ואיררו מכל חית השדה ומכל בהמה ופקד עליו שיהא מפשיט עורו לאחר שבע שנים, וסמאל נענש שנעשה שר מעשו הרשע, לעתיד כשיעקור הקב"ה מלכות אדום במהרה בימינו ישפילהו תחילה שנאמר (ישעי' כ"ד כא) יפקוד ה' על צבא מרום במרום, והאמירה והמיתה והעונש כל זה על שהוסיפה על ציווי של הקב"ה ועל זה נאמר כל המוסיף גורע, והשם יאיר עינינו במאור תורתו, וישם בלבנו יראתו, ויזכנו לקראתו, אשר הלבבות יאיר, ולב בינה יעור, והעינים זוהר יזהיר:

judgment of nine curses and death, and cast down Samael the wicked and his party from his holy place from the heavens, and cut off the feet of the serpent, and cursed it above every beast of the field and every animal, and decreed upon it that it should shed its skin every seven years; and Samael was punished, that he was made the prince of Esau the wicked. In the future, when the Holy One uproots the kingdom of Edom, speedily in our days, He will cast it down first, as it is said (Isaiah 24:21), 'the LORD will visit upon the host of the height on high.' And the speaking, and the death, and the punishment, all this was because she added to the commandment of the Holy One; and of this it is said: whoever adds, diminishes. And may the Name illumine our eyes with the light of His Torah, and place His fear in our hearts, and grant us to merit to meet Him: [He] who illumines the hearts; and may He light up the heart of understanding, and make the eyes shine with radiance.

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the serpent, Eve, and the north side

’The soul of the female is from the female, the soul of the male from the male’; the serpent ‘went after Eve’ because ‘her soul is from the north side (tzafon)’, and ‘the seduction was that he came upon her.’ Sod: the north is the left, the side of judgment and the demonic (the sitra achra; cf. § 109, the north ‘left open’), so the female soul drawn from it is the point where the serpent (Samael’s mount) could seize hold; the seduction of Eve is read as a literal violation, the origin of the impurity the serpent ‘cast into’ her (Shabbat 146a).

Samael, the serpent, and the fall

The Eden narrative in full: Samael the wicked, jealous of Adam’s dominion (Genesis 1:28), rode the serpent (in ‘the likeness of a camel’) to the woman. The serpent’s tactic worked on the two words Eve added to God’s command, ‘you shall not touch it’

(God had said only 'you shall not eat'; Genesis 2:17), so Samael touched the tree and did not die, and told her the same of eating. Eve ate, fearing that 'another woman' would replace her, and gave to Adam; 'his teeth were set on edge, and so the teeth of all the generations.' God judged (Psalm 9:5): Adam 'naked of works, of commandment, of deeds' (Genesis 3:10-11), his garment 'a skin of nail (or shel tzipporen)' stripped away; Adam blamed the woman (3:12), the woman the serpent. God decreed 'nine curses and death,' cast Samael and his host from heaven, cut the serpent's feet, and made Samael 'the prince of Esau the wicked' (Edom / Rome), to be cast down first in the redemption (Isaiah 24:21).

whoever adds, diminishes; and the closing blessing

The whole catastrophe, 'the speaking, the death, and the punishment', flowed from Eve's addition to God's word: this is the book's closing maxim, 'whoever adds, diminishes (kol ha-mosif gore'a)' (Sanhedrin 29a), the hermeneutic and ethical seal of the Bahir, to add to the received measure is to lose it, as she who added 'do not touch' lost the garden. Sod: the same law governs the sefirot and the letters (the divine 'addition' that overreaches becomes 'breaking'); faithful transmission, neither adding nor subtracting, is the whole discipline of the tradition. The book then ends in blessing: 'may the Name illumine our eyes with the light of His Torah, and place His fear in our hearts,

and grant us to merit to meet Him, who illumines the hearts, and lights up the heart of understanding, and makes the eyes shine with radiance': a prayer that the hidden light (§§ 147, 190) be given to the reader.

Editorial decisions

- **the closing colophon.** Section 200 ends the Bahir with a doxology ('may the Name illumine our eyes…'). It is rendered as a prayer/blessing, not smoothed into the narrative, since it is the book's closing colophon.

Colophon

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